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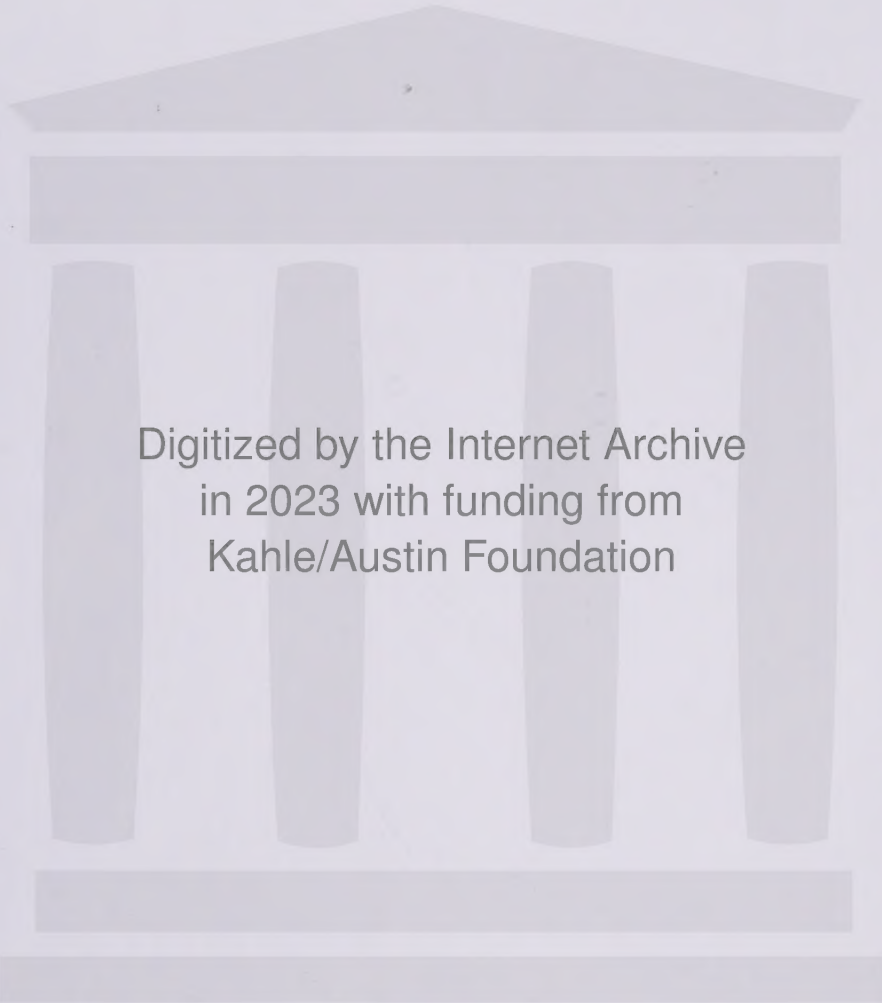


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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

WINTER 2003

VOL. 23 NO. 1



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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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# "AT THE HEAD OF THE ABORIGINAL REMNANT" CHEROKEE CONSTRUCTION OF A "CIVILIZED" INDIAN IDENTITY DURING THE LAKOTA CRISIS OF 1876

PAUL KELTON

In 1876 the bilingual Cherokee diplomat and lawyer William Penn Adair expressed great pride in the level of "civilization" that his nation had achieved. Defining civilization as commercial agriculture, literacy, Christianity, and republican government, Adair believed that his society had reached a sophistication that equaled and in certain areas surpassed that of the United States. Speaking before the US House of Representatives Committee on

**KEY WORDS:** William Penn Adair, Cherokee, Indian identity, Lakota, Sioux Removal, Indian Territory

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Territories, the diplomat claimed that his people produced surpluses of "every agricultural product that is raised in the neighboring States of Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Texas." Schools in the Indian Territory, he added, produced a vast number of students who were literate either in their own language or English, or both. "About four-fifths at least of the population of the Indian Territory can read and write, which cannot be said of the people of the United States," the lawyer bragged. He also claimed, with an unfortunate degree of intolerance, that Christianity was stronger in the Indian Territory than in the surrounding states. "All of our nations and tribes have more or less embraced the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, and have generally repudiated their ancient traditional religious beliefs and superstitions," he stated. "And, I must say that our religion is pure and free from the contaminations of . . . Mormonism, Mahometanism, Spiritualism, and that other class of religionists that murdered our SAVIOUR." Adair was particularly proud of his nation's political and judicial system. Since the early nineteenth century, the Cherokee had had a national legislature, a principal

chief, and a supreme court. Such institutions produced a degree of law and order that white communities could not match. "I need only to call your attention to the fact," Adair stated, "that there is more crime and of a more heinous character among whites of the United States than there is among the Indians."<sup>1</sup>

Adair certainly overstated the degree to which his people adopted Euro-American civilization, but he did describe several characteristics of his nation that made it different from other Native societies, especially the Lakota, who were receiving the bulk of America's attention in 1876. The Lakota were among the last Native American nations to confront Euro-American domination and to begin the process of adopting what whites and many Cherokee considered "civilization."<sup>2</sup> The Lakota had contact with Euro-Americans since the 1700s, but very few spoke English, even fewer practiced Christianity, and constitutional government was a foreign concept to the loosely allied tribal bands. Moreover, as late as 1876, many Lakota lacked experience as settled farmers. The majority of the Northern Plains tribe, including bands headed by Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, had only recently abandoned buffalo hunting and become confined to reservations in the Dakota Territory, where they remained dependent on the federal government. Other bands led by such individuals as Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse remained off the reservation, hunting in Montana and Wyoming and subsisting on what few buffalo remained.

Despite the seemingly deep cultural and historical gulf that separated the two nations, the "civilized" Cherokee found their own fate intersecting with that of the "uncivilized" Lakota in 1876. By 1 February 1876 all Lakota Indians, according to the order of the Secretary of the Interior, were to gather at their agencies, where US agents hoped to pressure them into ceding the Black Hills and removing to Indian Territory, thus becoming the neighbors of the Cherokee. Two years earlier the US Army had invaded the Black Hills and

announced the presence of gold; prospectors flooded into the sacred homeland of the Lakota, and western politicians called for the immediate acquisition of the valuable real estate. The Lakota, however, resisted the loss of the Black Hills. When 1 February 1876 passed, several bands remained off the reservation, forcing the US military to track them down. The military campaign reached its most significant point on 25 June when Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse's warriors and their Cheyenne and Arapaho allies destroyed George Armstrong Custer and his entire detachment of men. Unfortunately, Custer's defeat only increased the federal government's efforts to punish Native Americans. For those Indians on the reservation, US agents stepped up their demands that the Lakota give up their sacred land and move to a distant home in Indian Territory.<sup>3</sup>

While hundreds of miles away from the Lakota, the Cherokee understandably became concerned about the tumultuous events on the Northern Plains. A significant number of the 14,000 Cherokee, but certainly not the majority, read about the Lakota and expressed their views in English. While the recorded discourse of this English-speaking minority cannot reveal how everyone in their nation thought, it does give us a rare view of how at least one group of Indians conceived of their relationship with a radically different Native group with whom they had little if any first-hand experience. Such discourse indeed reveals how and why English-speaking Cherokee, those whose language skills could have prepared them to assimilate into Euro-American society, nonetheless chose to identify as Indians and continued to call for a separate existence of Native peoples. At the same time, Cherokee discourse also reveals the limits of Indian identity. English-speaking individuals, especially those whose leadership positions forced them to interact with antagonistic whites, chose to adopt the "civilized" label in order to distinguish themselves from "wild" Indians such as the Lakota.<sup>4</sup>

SCENE I: THE CHEROKEE INVADE  
WASHINGTON

In 1876 the Cherokee, like the Lakota, were engaged in battle with the forces of white expansion. Instead of donning war paint and confronting the bluecoats on the high plains, though, Cherokee diplomats took the train to Washington, D.C., where they lobbied Congress to defeat various bills that were detrimental to Indian sovereignty. Since 1866 nearly every session of Congress had entertained at least one of these so-called Oklahoma bills, each aimed to dissolve the Cherokee as well as Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations, to open their land for white settlement and to force Indians to become US citizens.<sup>5</sup> Cherokee diplomats had become quite skilled in mobilizing the support of sympathetic whites, but they faced the daunting task of countering the efforts of railroad lobbyists and western politicians who wanted to end the autonomy of Indian nations. Such enemies of Indian sovereignty personally attacked English-speaking diplomats as a corrupt group of "mixed-bloods" who lived off tribal annuities and were concerned only with their own power. Their "full-blood" constituents, meanwhile, supposedly remained impoverished and ignorant of the advantages that assimilation into the United States would bring them.<sup>6</sup>

Criticism certainly stung the diplomats, but the enemies of Indian sovereignty oversimplified their nation's politics. A large number of Cherokee possessed both Indian and European ancestry, but such individuals did not constitute a monolithic group who remained apart from those of only Cherokee descent. "Blood" did not serve as a political dividing line of the roughly 14,000 members of the Cherokee Nation. In 1876 the Downing Party, which was named after the late principal chief Lewis Downing, had majority power in the National Council. The core of this party revolved around a group known as the Keetoowah Society, whose cultural conservatism often led

outsiders and later historians to label it a "full-blood" organization. Indeed, the Keetoowahs elected one of their own, Oochalata, to the position of principal chief and took the leading role in appointing diplomats to serve Cherokee interests in Washington. The Downings, while seeming to be a "full-blood" party, nonetheless had a number of members of mixed Cherokee and European descent, including William Penn Adair, whom the Keetoowahs continually supported as a diplomat. The Downings' rival, the National Party, also had members of both mixed and pure descent. Its head was William Potter Ross, a former principal chief and current diplomat from a prestigious family whose ancestry included both Cherokee and Europeans. Ross counted on longstanding support that his family had built among the so-called full-bloods. Rather than blood, political divisions fell along a complicated matrix of family loyalties, clan membership, popular appeal of particular leaders, and variety of other factors. At times, divisions between the National and Downing Parties could become heated, but they both united on the issue of Cherokee nationalism. Both parties strove to protect Indian sovereignty and joined forces in lobbying the federal government to defeat the Oklahoma bills.<sup>7</sup>

While blood did not translate into political divisions, neither did the cultural differences that appeared to distinguish diplomats from the rank and file. On the surface, diplomats such as Adair and Ross epitomized what US officials wanted Indians to become. They were highly educated, devoted Christians whose fluency in English allowed them to engage in the larger Euro-American world of politics and commerce. Most Cherokee, though, did not adopt non-Native customs to the extent that Adair and Ross did. Aspects of Euro-American civilization pervaded most sectors of Cherokee society: many Cherokee families participated in electoral politics, maintained farms, kept livestock, sent their children to school, and even participated in Christian



church services. Nevertheless, such accommodation to "civilization" did not completely erase tribal folklore, medical rituals, kinship relations, gender roles, and other customs that predated European contact. Language was especially a symbol of cultural conservatism among the many individuals who chose to speak only their native tongue as a marker of their separate identity from the outside world. It was precisely the persistence of the Cherokee language that brought cultural conservatives and English speakers together. Native speakers depended on those fluent in English to defend Cherokee interests from the enemies of Indian sovereignty. Nationalist leaders such as William Penn Adair and William Potter Ross fit that role well.

Still, cultural conservatives did not extend trust to all English speakers in their nation. A small minority, often referred to as "progressives," went beyond merely speaking the language of their white neighbors; they also longed for the eventual dissolution of Indian nations and assimilation of individual Cherokee as US citizens. Leading the progressive faction was the articulate entrepreneur Elias Cornelius Boudinot, a self-proclaimed expert on Indian affairs who frequently traveled to Washington, D.C., on his own behalf and publicly shared his views with receptive railroad executives, western politicians, and other opponents of Indian autonomy. For his radical position, Boudinot made himself a bane to nationalist Cherokee, both English speakers and cultural conservatives, who excluded him and his progressive faction from political power.<sup>8</sup> Progressives may not have had much political power within their nation, but they cast a long shadow on the internal dynamics of Cherokee society. English-speaking diplomats certainly became even more sensitive to the need to maintain the trust of their native-speaking supporters.

When nationalist diplomats arrived in Washington, they carried the political baggage of the Cherokee Nation with them. They had to defend the interests of their people while distinguishing themselves from the

progressives. Moreover, they faced attacks from proponents of the Oklahoma bills who challenged their legitimacy as leaders of Native peoples. To make matters worse, the mood of Congress was shifting against Indians. As the Lakota defied orders to return to their reservation, many congressmen called for the transfer of Indian affairs from the Interior to the War Department. While fulfilling their national duties to defend Native sovereignty and responding to their critics, Cherokee diplomats were pulled into the larger debate on Indian affairs, forcing them to comment on geographically distant Native peoples. But such a debate played into hands of English-speaking diplomats, who were attempting to assert their legitimacy as leaders both within and outside the Cherokee Nation. Events on the Northern Plains gave nationalists an opportunity to construct an Indian identity that silenced their detractors, set themselves apart from progressives, and satisfied their constituents.

One day before the Secretary of the Interior declared that all Lakota not on their reservations would be considered hostile, William Penn Adair, a member of the Downing Party, gave the House Committee on Territories a warning about employing the army to conduct US Indian policy. "They [the Plains Indians] are at peace with the Government and your people," Adair claimed, "yet they are in constant dread lest they may at any time be invaded by the army." Such dread was understandable, given the history of US Indian affairs. The Cherokee lawyer had grown disturbed at the number of recent massacres of Native Americans in which white offenders went unpunished, and he warned that western Indians had not forgotten the atrocities. "The destruction of their people by the army at . . . 'Sand Creek,' 'Black Kettle,' and 'Camp Grant' . . . in which old and harmless men and sick women and children were murdered and butchered is still fresh in the memories of the . . . Indians," Adair exclaimed. "And when they consider the wrong-doers have never been punished, it is but human for them,

in their ignorance, to think that the soldiers have authority to kill Indians when they please."<sup>9</sup>

Adair's criticism of US Indian policy went beyond mere sympathy for geographically distant Indians. The bilingual diplomat made it clear that he identified with all western Indians as people of his own race. "So far as I am concerned," Adair exclaimed, "I hope I shall never be unmindful of the fact that my ancestors, in the Indian line, were *full-blooded* Indians, and which the Anglo-Saxon race have been pleased to term 'wild Indians,' and, gentlemen, my sympathies lean towards *all* classes of my unfortunate race." Adair went on to establish a hereditary link with peoples living far away. "The wild Indians of the western plains and mountains I look upon as my brothers of *pure* blood."<sup>10</sup> Such comments certainly resonated in the ears of paternalistic whites who shared the diplomat's repugnance for "extermination," but they were also aimed at the progressive faction of the Cherokee Nation, particularly Elias Cornelius Boudinot. Boudinot attended the committee meeting without any authorization from the Cherokee Nation and spoke in support of not only the Oklahoma bill but also the transfer of the Indian Bureau from the Interior to the War Department. Adair thought that such a transfer would lead to extermination, and that in favoring it Boudinot had betrayed not only Indians such as the Lakota but also the entire Native race. Adair, a nationalist, was proclaiming a pan-Indian identity that progressives such as Boudinot loathed to adopt.

By employing the idea of a common race, expressed with the folk metaphor of "blood," and by highlighting the atrocities that Native peoples faced, William Penn Adair characterized himself as an Indian with concerns for all Native peoples. This identity served him well politically. Adair delivered his words not only to members of Congress but also to his constituents. The Cherokee national newspaper, the *Advocate*, printed in both Cherokee and English, frequently published news received from national delegates to Washington and

even encouraged Cherokee to form reading clubs to become aware of the difficulties their nation faced. By reading Adair's views in the pages of the *Advocate*, Cherokee were warned about the dangers that threatened all Indian people and learned that the English-speaking delegation served as dedicated advocates.<sup>11</sup> By reflecting on the full scope of Indian affairs, Adair affirmed his links to his culturally conservative constituents and his distinction from progressives. It apparently worked. The Cherokee continually elected Adair to represent them in Washington and rewarded the lawyer with the position of assistant principal chief in 1879.<sup>12</sup>

As did Adair, William Potter Ross, visiting Washington at the same time as his political rival, referred to events on the Northern Plains while defending Cherokee sovereignty. Testifying before the House Committee on Indian Affairs on 8 March, Ross compared the incessant Oklahoma bills with the army's invasion of the Black Hills. Each Oklahoma bill threatened the Indians with the potential influx of speculators, settlers, and others who would quickly take over Indian lands. For Ross, the Cherokee only had to look at events on the Northern Plains to confirm their suspicions of the Oklahoma bill. With greedy prospectors rushing into the Black Hills after the announcement of gold, the Lakota were faced with the threat of losing their sacred land. "The expedition to the Black Hills is producing effects which always follow, with greater or lesser intensity, the slightest opening into an Indian country," Ross exclaimed, "and the same results would succeed any action . . . unsettling the lawful condition of the Indian Territory." Ross went on to ask rhetorically, "Is not the seizure of that country [the Black Hills] the end to be obtained by the adoption of any one of the numerous schemes hatched annually for the organization of the Territory of Oklahoma?"<sup>13</sup>

Later in March, English-speaking nationalists again spoke about events on the Northern Plains. In a letter to Congress, William Penn Adair, his cousin John Adair, and their

political rivals Daniel and Rufus Ross joined with delegates of the Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole Nations to condemn the proposed transfer of Indian affairs from the Interior to the War Department. English speakers, of course, did not want to be under the control of the military, but they claimed they were protecting more than their own interest. "With authority of and for our people, whom we especially represent at Washington, and in common sympathy with and desire for justice to our race, we ask you in their behalf to not pass any bill making such a transfer," the diplomats stated.<sup>14</sup> In making their case, Indian delegates placed both the Trail of Tears and events in the Black Hills within the same context of the US military aiding rapacious whites in expropriating Indian land: "We can only discharge our duty to our peoples and race in this emergency by plainly assuring you that our conviction is that this movement to put our people and their property under military control is for the purpose of doing by force what has not been done by civil power; to overthrow and destroy us, as was done by the military when we resided east of the Mississippi."<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, it appeared to the diplomats that the military was combining with corrupt whites to destroy the Lakota. "It is a fact that is even now being verified at the Black Hills, that the presence of troops begets trouble with Indians," they stated. "Traders, contractors, liquor dealers, supply men, and that other class of hangers-on, middle-men, and loafers, who follow an army and are found at posts, and all of whom do their parts in producing conflict between Indians and citizens, or with the army."<sup>16</sup> The diplomats concluded that past atrocities invalidated the army as a proper agent in dealing with Indians. The military could only reap what it had already sown. "The many bloody massacres of Indians, including women and children," the diplomats exclaimed, would lead to distrust and further conflict.<sup>17</sup>

By criticizing the conduct of US Indian affairs, Cherokee delegates attempted to show their own constituents and outside critics that

they were concerned with more than their own privileged position. They took it upon themselves to give a voice to the Lakota and other geographically distant Native peoples who shared a similar struggle against white expansion. While providing a Native voice, however, English-speaking Cherokee carefully maintained their self-perceived sense of superiority over "uncivilized" Indians. "The rapidity with which we have advanced in civilization, both east and west of the Mississippi, is unparalleled in the history of nations," diplomats bragged in one typical example.<sup>18</sup> The Cherokee unabashedly lauded their cultural achievements, but they maintained that they would not leave behind those they considered less advanced. Diplomats promoted themselves as a model for Native peoples to emulate, thus translating their "civilized" identity into paternal regard for the well-being of the Lakota and other so-called wild Indians. Such paternalism was certainly an effort to silence critics who believed English-speaking diplomats cared for nothing but their own power.

Guided by their sense of paternalism, Cherokee diplomats welcomed the resettlement of their "uncivilized" brethren in the Indian Territory. What better way of redeeming "wild" Indians than placing them next to their "civilized" betters in a homeland reserved for Native Americans? William Penn Adair, for example, who believed that western Indians were "poor," "weak," and "ignorant," proclaimed that the western Indians' "ultimate hope for salvation, I think, is inside of the Indian country, on lands set apart for them by our treaties of 1866." He added, "There, if they have time, they can be protected and learn lessons of civilization, and will, if left alone, become civilized as the civilized Indians are now."<sup>19</sup>

William Potter Ross also argued that the preservation of the Indian Territory would allow all Indians to become "civilized." There, other Native Americans would imitate the practices of the Cherokee. These included speaking English as well as "the accumulation



of wealth, the spread of [Christian] religion, and the intermarriage with whites."<sup>20</sup> Another Cherokee nationalist echoed Adair and Ross. Joel M. Bryan, an official diplomat also sent to Washington to lobby against the Oklahoma bill, said it best. "Let the Indian question of the Territory rest, and let the Indians rest," Bryan urged Congress. "The Indians of the Territory are generally advancing in civilization, religion, and morality; and if let alone and encouraged their present organization will be the easiest and cheapest plan that can be adopted to reclaim and civilize the wild Indians of the Plains."<sup>21</sup>

By welcoming "wild" Indians into Indian Territory, Cherokee diplomats shrewdly tied the goal of white reformers to "civilize" the Indians with their own goal of retaining their sovereignty. If the Indian Territory remained a separate homeland for Native peoples, they would be protected from military conquest and the corrupting influence of frontier whites. But if the Oklahoma bill passed and the last homeland of the Indians became inundated with whites, the promise of a "civilized" future for American Indians would collapse. Native peoples would surely be destroyed amid a hostile population who believed extinction was the Indian's only fate. "The Indians believe," William Penn Adair exclaimed, "that the Indian country is the LAST HOPE of the Indians in North America, and they are therefore tenacious for its preservation."<sup>22</sup> The nationalists' concern for and identification with Native peoples outside of their bounds corresponded well with their efforts to retain Cherokee autonomy.

## SCENE II: THE BOUDINOT EXCEPTION TO THE NATIONALIST RULE

As did nationalist diplomats, Elias Cornelius Boudinot and progressives claimed superiority over the so-called wild Indians but did not translate such pretensions into paternalistic concern. Boudinot in fact showed contempt for many in his own nation, whom he

believed were beholden to the Ross family. Boudinot blamed the Ross family for the murder of his father, Elias Sr., and his uncle and cousin, Major Ridge and John Ridge, in 1839. The elder Boudinot and the Ridges led the faction that signed the infamous Treaty of New Echota in 1835, which ceded all of the Cherokee's eastern lands for lands in the West and which ultimately resulted in the Trail of Tears. The majority of Cherokee, who followed the leadership of the Ross family, did not agree to this treaty, and once removal was complete, unknown assailants took revenge on its most prominent signers. For Boudinot, old wounds had not yet healed; he claimed that the same parties responsible for his father's death still held a reign of terror. "Red-handed murder stalks with defiant and insolent steps through the length and breadth of this fair territory," the estranged man charged. The Cherokee who favored incorporation into the United States, according to Boudinot, refused to speak "because they stand in dread of a gang of desperadoes and murderers, who live by theft and thrive by assassination."<sup>23</sup> The best hope for Indians, then, was not a separate existence but passage of the Oklahoma bill and complete assimilation into American society.<sup>24</sup> "The Indians will bless you," Boudinot informed members of the US House of Representatives, "if he but understands that he is elevated from the degrading rank of a ward and subject to the proud position of American citizen."<sup>25</sup>

Elias Cornelius Boudinot's political positions cannot be traced to his family's troubled history alone. He also looked favorably upon US citizenship because he embraced an individualistic entrepreneurial ethic and looked forward to the expanded economic opportunities that the creation of Oklahoma would bring for him.<sup>26</sup> As a Cherokee citizen, Boudinot had purchased land from his nation in Vinita, a town that lay at the intersection of the two railroads that received rights-of-way in accordance with the Treaty of 1866. The entrepreneur had dreams that Indian Territory would someday become a state, thus

flooding the land with white settlers, bringing a precipitous rise in property values, and increasing the clientele of a hotel he planned to build in Vinita. He boasted to a railroad lobbyist that property value in the Cherokee Nation would increase ten times over the existing value.<sup>27</sup> He also had bragged that "when the territorial bill passes my road to wealth is open [and] I'll order some marble work at great cost to decorate my villas."<sup>28</sup>

With Boudinot and other progressives resting their economic future on the breakup of Indian nations, they embraced a laissez-faire attitude toward other Native Americans. One of Boudinot's allies, for example, privately lambasted Cherokee nationalists as "the Hog and Hominy class" that cared nothing for enterprise.<sup>29</sup> Another lamented that if the anti-territorial majority "will not come over and stand on the bright side of civilization and success let them go to their wallow, but don't let them drag us in with them."<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly, progressives failed to embrace the cause of non-Cherokee Indians and condemned nationalists for associating too closely with other Indians. "The only objection we have heard to this policy of dividing the lands," progressives wrote, "is that of one of the Delegates [probably William Penn Adair], who says it would prove disastrous to the blanket Indians. . . . We did not know before that our delegation were representing any blanket Indians, or that there were any such in our Nation."<sup>31</sup> Placement of the Lakota or other "blanket" Indians near the Cherokee Nation was an unacceptable proposition to progressives. Having them as neighbors would decrease property values and destroy potential commerce with whites. Speaking to members of Congress, Boudinot claimed that placement of so-called wild tribes next to the Cherokee would "greatly retard our progress and result in a great loss to us pecuniarily."<sup>32</sup> While nationalists adopted a pan-Indian yet paternalistic identity to defend Cherokee sovereignty, progressives distanced themselves from other Native Americans to promote their economic interests.

### SCENE III: CUSTER'S LAST STAND IN TAHLEQUAH

With their disdainful approach to other Indians, progressives remained a minority voice within the Cherokee Nation. English-speaking nationalists such as William Penn Adair and William Potter Ross continued to enjoy more support. Indeed, other English speakers echoed the views of their nationalist diplomats when they received news of Custer's defeat and heard the heightened cries for extermination that emanated from western white communities. Events on the Northern Plains in the summer of 1876 led many Cherokee to support the Lakota in their common struggle against white hostility.

The year 1876 was not the first time the Cherokee addressed the Lakota and their problems. In August of 1874, the *Cherokee Advocate* heaped scorn on General George Custer for invading the Black Hills, announcing the presence of gold, and initiating a rush of Euro-Americans into land guaranteed to Indians by the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.<sup>33</sup> John L. Adair, the editor, reprinted sympathetic articles extracted from eastern presses that claimed that the Lakota would fight and would have, according to one account, "a strong color of right on their side." The editor himself claimed that antagonistic whites fabricated the reports of gold and that Custer had no right to intrude upon Indian land. Adair was most disgusted with gold-hungry westerners and their attempts to force the Lakota to cede land. "They expect to compel Congress," the editor declared, "by circumstances to commit a crime against a weak and defenseless people that a horde of gold hunters may be protected." Of course, the Cherokee also worried about how events in the Dakotas would affect Indian sovereignty. The invasion of the Black Hills and threatening the Lakota with an ultimatum to cede their land, according to Adair, "shadow the regard in which some people hold Indian Treaties."<sup>34</sup>

In the summer of 1876, articles, editorials, and letters concerning the Battle of Little Big-

horn again filled the columns of the *Advocate*, and the Cherokee again defended the Lakota. One Cherokee wrote the *Advocate* identifying the crisis on the Northern Plains as originating with a selfish land grab. "In leaving their homes in the Black Hills," the Cherokee wrote, "[the Lakota] go as victims of *wrong, wrong, execrable wrong*." He went on to condemn the federal government for failing to live up to its treaty obligations. "That she does not face her duty in these respects is evidence of inexcusable dereliction."<sup>35</sup>

The new editor of the *Advocate*, William P. Boudinot, who bitterly opposed his estranged brother Elias Cornelius and the Oklahoma bills, also cast blame for the war on the avarice of whites. He defended Sitting Bull for only doing what other peoples would do—protecting his land from theft. The responsibility for violence lay squarely with the army due to "their attempt to take forcible possession of the Black Hills country." The editor also accused the Euro-American invaders who followed Custer's initial expedition for encouraging the army to round up Indians not on their reservations. These "intruders," the editor charged, displayed nothing but "contemptuous hatred of Indians." In such hatred, Boudinot saw an ominous fate for Native peoples. The editor reprinted a letter extracted from a western newspaper to serve as a warning to his fellow Cherokee. "The chronic hate of the white settler," the *Denver Mirror* charged, "will be intensified into a malignant determination to exterminate the race since the news of the killing of Gen[eral] Custer."<sup>36</sup>

The calls for "extermination" indeed traumatized many English-speaking Cherokee but made them no less willing to identify with the Lakota. After hearing of the Plains Wars, Ezekiel Buffington expressed his outrage with US Indian affairs. "I cannot longer remain a silent spectator and turn a deaf ear to the promptings of my duty," he wrote to the *Advocate*, "while wrongs and injustices daily threaten [the Indian's] annihilation." The outraged Cherokee lambasted the policy of extermination and expressed a feeling of kin-

ship with the Native warriors who resisted what he regarded as injustice. "I am happy," he declared, "that the blood of this unfortunate and despised race courses through my veins, and for [the Plains Indians] I cannot but help to feel the tenderest regard and sympathy."<sup>37</sup>

As did Buffington, Ann Bell Shelton expressed in her private correspondence feelings of kinship with the Lakota and disgust with US Indian affairs. Living in Texas at the time, Shelton wrote, "I admire Sitting B[ull] amazingly and I don't want blood shed on either side, but I don't want him to come to any harm." The Cherokee woman, however, expressed concern about white hostility that the Plains Wars exacerbated. Referring to the "Indian question," she complained, "my soul sickens at the very mention of it. The talk of extermination, just the same as if it were rats they were talking of." Indeed, the calls for extermination did scar the young woman. "I wish sometimes," she exclaimed fatalistically, "the whole of us, from the pure Indian to the last one with the millionth part of a drop of blood could be cut off in a moment and the vexed question stopped forever."<sup>38</sup>

#### SCENE IV: A VISIT FROM SPOTTED TAIL

Reading about the invasion of the Black Hills and Custer's Last Stand inspired many English-speaking Cherokee to express their outrage with Euro-American attitudes and US Indian policy. Nationalist sentiments even led some to view the Lakota as kinsmen locked in a common cause of resisting white expansion. In late October 1876, Cherokee would have another unique opportunity to discuss their relationship with the Lakota. US agents escorted Chief Spotted Tail and ninety other Lakota to visit Indian Territory. Just weeks prior to his visit, US agents withheld rations from Spotted Tail and several other chiefs and their people, forcing them to sign a treaty ceding the Black Hills. White officials hoped that they could also pressure them into agreeing to relocate to a reservation in Indian Territory.<sup>39</sup> The Cherokee thus were faced with



the possibility of having to fulfill their previous promises that they would welcome the Lakota.

As one might expect, Elias Cornelius Boudinot and progressives expressed a strong aversion to living next to a group that they considered "wild" and, given recent events, possibly dangerous. Boudinot condemned Cherokee diplomats for their earlier promises in Washington to welcome "uncivilized" Natives to Indian Territory. For Boudinot, whites would make better neighbors. "No doubt [Cherokee nationalists] would rather see a band of Sitting Bull's fellows located among [their] people than the same number of good, honest white men," the entrepreneur charged.<sup>40</sup> Some English speakers who had expressed sympathy for the Lakota also found themselves exhibiting the same contemptuous attitude as that of Boudinot. Ann Bell Shelton, for example, who earlier claimed that she admired Sitting Bull, wrote, "[I]t was a great source of satisfaction to me to see that Col. [Elias Cornelius] Boudinot protested against all that wild savage element coming into the territory."<sup>41</sup>

Cherokee diplomats such as William Potter Ross and William Penn Adair could not afford to be so contemptuous. If they were, they might seem as traitors to their race, thus alienating their culturally conservative constituents and disaffecting sympathetic whites who looked upon the "civilized" Indians as leaders of Native peoples. Consequently, a group of Cherokee including Ross and probably Adair traveled to Muskogee in the nearby Creek Nation to greet Spotted Tail. According to US agents who accompanied the Lakota, Ross "expressed to the chiefs a deep interest in the welfare of their people, and hoped they would decide to make the country they had visited their home to commence the work of civilization." Unfortunately, the exact content of the dialogue between the Cherokee and the Lakota went unrecorded or has not survived in the written records.<sup>42</sup>

While Adair's and Ross's voices remain silent due to the inadequacies of the historical record, William P. Boudinot spoke loudly

through the pages of the *Advocate*. Interestingly, the editor proclaimed that the Cherokee should not welcome the Lakota. "So far as the Sioux are concerned we wish them well," proclaimed the editor, "and so wishing them well we do not now welcome them to this territory."<sup>43</sup> Boudinot, however, derived his position from reasons different than those of his brother. The editor clearly saw that the Lakota were being coerced to move and that such conduct of Indian policy by federal officials threatened all Indians. "If the Sioux, do not wish to move . . . we but lessen our own right [to our land]," he claimed, "which may hereafter be jeopardized . . . by simply saying 'welcome' when the government by force or fraud propose to move them against their will." Boudinot went on to add that if the Lakota could speak to the Cherokee they would say, "[I]f you are friends to us and have my voice to express in the matter join with us in resisting the tyranny of the [US] government."<sup>44</sup>

On the surface, the editor's reaction to Lakota removal may appear to be mere rationalization for an unspoken fear of living next to Indians they considered "wild." In addition, the silence of Adair and Ross makes their earlier rhetorical support of the Lakota appear insincere. Such an interpretation, though, ignores the possibility that Cherokee nationalists, especially William P. Boudinot, may have realized that circumstances surrounding Spotted Tail's visit bore a striking resemblance to events that ended in the Cherokee's Trail of Tears. In the early 1830s, William Boudinot's father, Elias Boudinot Sr., found himself in a position similar to Spotted Tail's. Georgians had confiscated the property of many Cherokee and prevented them from defending themselves in court; the federal government refused to curtail Georgia's unconstitutional and illegal actions and instead asked the Indians to give up their land and remove west. The majority of Cherokee stubbornly refused to give in and clung to their Native homeland, but Elias Boudinot Sr. thought such resistance was futile. He joined others in signing the Treaty of New Echota, without the approval of the

national council, an act that ultimately cost him his life. With Spotted Tail's visit, it must have occurred to William Boudinot that history was repeating itself. Like the Cherokee, the Lakota were being forced to leave their beloved homelands against their will. The editor probably did not wish to put into print what obviously must have occurred to him. He certainly did not want to appear apologetic for his father and dredge up old wounds among the Cherokee, who in 1876 were still trying to overcome years of internal strife and to build a unified resistance against the Oklahoma bills.<sup>45</sup>

While the editor did not publish his understanding of the parallels in history, other Cherokee did. One English speaker, writing under the Native name Tooquastee, reminded his fellow Cherokee that gold drew illegal squatters into the Cherokee Nation in 1828 just as it had in the Black Hills in 1874. And in both cases, the federal government did not protect Native peoples from oppression but only asked them to leave. "Shut out of the courts of justice, we were jeered, insulted, and slain by white men with impunity," he reminded his people. "The present scene in the Black Hills," the perceptive Tooquastee concluded, "is but the repetition of this piece of Cherokee history, only more flagrant and therefore more bloody." The infuriated writer went on to condemn the "friends of extermination" for causing the Plains Indians to rebel. The recent hostilities, he concluded, were "only additional admonitions proclaiming to the ear of the civilized world . . . that Indians are human beings and that it is wrong to oppress them."<sup>46</sup>

Because some Cherokee could see the repetition of their own history in the Dakotas, they rejected the removal of the Lakota while maintaining a common identity as Indians who shared a heritage of victimization. Yet throughout the military conflict and debate on Lakota removal, English-speaking Cherokee continued to affirm their self-perceived cultural superiority over the Plains Indians. Just weeks prior to the visit of Spotted Tail, William P.

Boudinot wrote, "[L]et it not once be supposed that we are not an Indian to the back bone with all the dislike, prejudice, and contempt for the white color that the red ought to have." The Cherokee, however, were not the same as the warlike Indians of the Plains. "We profess to be an Indian in having less aversion to other races than *they* have," the editor exclaimed. Boudinot boasted about his people's level of "civilization" and said that their imitation of "enlightened" and "Christian" white men was responsible for "the position this Tribe now holds at the head of the Aboriginal Remnant."<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As 1876 came to an end, the curious intersection of Lakota and Cherokee history came to an anticlimatic finish. Spotted Tail of course did not like the Indian Territory, returned home, and spurned federal efforts to get him to move. The issue of Lakota removal subsequently subsided, and the two great Indian nations would forever remain geographically distant. The issues of 1876, however, would continue to face the Cherokee in subsequent years. Throughout the remainder of the decade, the Cherokee would be asked to accept the settlement of relocated western tribes on their lands. Indeed, the Cherokee agreed to sell territory to the federal government for use by western tribes. Meanwhile, the Cherokee remained focused on the injustices that all Indians faced and linked this pan-Indian struggle with their own efforts to defend themselves against schemes to destroy their sovereignty. Ultimately, the Cherokee's dream of a separate homeland in which Indians could remain autonomous became lost. Beginning in the 1890s Congress approved a series of measures that destroyed the sovereignty of nations in the Indian Territory and ultimately created the state of Oklahoma in 1907.

While no tangible results came from the intersection of Lakota and Cherokee history in 1876, the episode does have important significance. Cherokee discourse concerning the

Lakota, events on the Northern Plains, and their possible relocation to Indian Territory should not be dismissed as insincere rhetoric or as a convenient tactic to defend their own self-interest. Instead, such discourse demonstrates the internal struggles of a number of English-speaking American Indians to define who they were. Such individuals, whose abilities put them in the middle of Euro-American and Native worlds, aspired to leadership both within and outside their own nation, but in doing so, they had to articulate their way between contradictory political spheres. Rank-and-file Cherokee desired that their nation remain autonomous, while at the same time outside whites accorded Indians no future as separate peoples, or worse, as animals who should be exterminated. Nationalists such as William Penn Adair, William Potter Ross, and William P. Boudinot attempted to transcend this contradiction by creating an identity as both Indian and "civilized." On the one hand, English speakers revealed in their discussions of the Lakota that they were indeed Indians, and as such they shared in the struggles of all Native peoples in their effort to retain their sovereignty. On the other hand, the Indians' separate existence was a hard sell to white policymakers. "Civilization" for English-speaking Cherokee was the key to making this sell. By being "civilized," they claimed they should take a leading role in saving other Indians from both their "uncivilized" customs and hostile whites. The Cherokee thus volunteered their "civilized" identity as an aid to the United States in accomplishing its policy goals. But such assistance was only going to come if whites allowed Indians to live within their own sovereign nations.

The construction of a "civilized" Indian identity served English-speaking Cherokee well in their effort to build legitimacy both at home and abroad. Such a construction also demonstrated a central irony of federal policy. English fluency was supposed to be a tool to prepare Native peoples to surrender their Indianness and assimilate into Euro-American society. Instead, it became a way of the

Cherokee to understand how they shared a common identity not with whites whose culture they emulated but with the Lakota. In 1876 Cherokee read about the struggle of the Lakota to retain the Black Hills and came to the painful acknowledgment that the whole affair on the Northern Plains bore a close resemblance to events in Georgia over forty years earlier. Also, in 1876 they concluded that the same historical processes were bearing down on "civilized" as well as "wild" Indians. The Oklahoma bills and the invasion of the Black Hills were yet more examples of the rapaciousness of whites, which all Indians have had to confront. English literacy, while not always necessary for the construction of Indian identity, nonetheless expanded the Cherokee's geographic vision of being Indian. The narrative of events being created by Euro-American avarice and being recorded in the dominant language reminded English-speaking Cherokee nationalists what they had in common with peoples living far away. English literacy encouraged nationalists Cherokee to choose to defend the interests of Indians rather than forget the Native identity that Euro-Americans wanted to erase.

Consciousness of Indianness, however, had its limits. Progressives such as Elias Cornelius Boudinot embraced neither the cause of Cherokee sovereignty nor a common identity with the Lakota. Instead, he was willing to plunge himself into a new status of a US citizen, leaving behind the so-called blanket Indians from whom he chose to distance himself. The time had arrived for progressive Indians to escape the fate of so many members of their race and become completely assimilated into Euro-American society. For the Lakota and other "wild" Indians, it was perhaps too late. History was overwhelming them, and the Cherokee should beware of associating with them too closely lest they be exterminated as well.

Nationalists of course did not go so far. They also pointed out their differences with the Lakota but translated those differences into the very reason that they should be concerned



about other Indians. They viewed themselves as the "civilized" representatives of their race who had a special duty to lead the Lakota and other "wild" Indians to a level of equality with Euro-Americans. Or at the very least, the Cherokee could stay the destruction of Indians by setting an example that Native peoples could be "civilized." William Penn Adair, for example, stated it quite well when he remarked at an agricultural fair in 1878:

From this Christian theory I have advanced and reviewing the past as among the dead and the future pregnant with hope for all races of men it occurs to me that the most vital question that should concern us at this time as Indians, especially on this great occasion is: What duty do we, the present generation of Indians, owe to ourselves and our posterity? The answer to this question, it seems to me, covers no debatable ground, and is, that it should be our duty to push our people forward in civilization.<sup>48</sup>

Just two years earlier it must have appeared to Adair and other English speakers that history seemed to be overwhelming all Indians. Cherokee nationalists were not certain that any Indians, whether "civilized" or not, would have a future in what was becoming an increasingly hostile world for peoples of Native American descent. English-speaking nationalists thus continued to defend the Indian's separate existence and their own role "at the head of the Aboriginal Remnant," leading the way for Indians to best adapt to the history that had threatened to destroy them all.

## NOTES

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1. William Penn Adair, "Remarks of W. P. Adair, Cherokee Delegate in Relation to the Expediency and Legality of Organizing the Indian Country into a Territory of 'Ok-la-ho-ma,' made before the Committee on Territories, of the House of Representatives of the United States," 31 January 1876, quotes on pp. 27, 31 (Adair's emphases). Unless otherwise cited, all publications of Cherokee speeches and protests made before or submitted to members of Congress can be found in the Grant Foreman Collection, Archives Department, Thomas Gilcrease Museum of American Art and History, Tulsa, Okla.

2. Although the United States in the 1870s was moving away from its agrarian past and becoming an industrial civilization, Cherokee as well as white policymakers held to older Jeffersonian ideals. On the origins and persistence of an agrarian definition of civilization in Indian policy, see Bernard Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and American Indians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), and Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: the United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

3. The events on the Northern Plains have been addressed in numerous works. Two recent works include Gary Anderson, *Sitting Bull and the Paradox of Lakota Nationhood* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), and Robert Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: the Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993).

4. Since this paper is based on English-language sources, its claims do not extend to the entire Cherokee Nation. It does not assume that the opinions of the English-speaking minority, especially on what constituted "civilization," reflected the views of Cherokee who spoke only their native tongue. Nevertheless, English speakers are worthy subjects of study given the important role they played in shaping the destiny of their nation. How they constructed their identity also offers evidence of how individuals from other tribes who traveled in both Euro-American and Native worlds may have viewed themselves. The issue of American Indian identity has received a growing amount of scholarly attention that ranges from the colonial period to contemporary times and embraces a number of different tribal peoples. See Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); James A. Clifton, ed., *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

University Press, 1992); Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102 (June 1997): 625-44; Jack M. Schultz, *The Seminole Baptist Churches of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); and Mary Jane Warde, *George Washington Grayson and the Creek Nation, 1843-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

5. For an overview of the congressional debate over territorial bills, see Roy Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1917), and Jeffrey Burton, *Indian Territory and the United States, 1866-1906: Courts, Government, and the Movement for Oklahoma Statehood* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

6. Gardiner G. Hubbard, "Argument of Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard, Before the Committee on Territories on a Territorial Government For Oklahoma," 11 February 1876 (Washington, D.C.: Beardsley and Snodgrass, 1876), p. 12. Anglo-Americans frequently leveled accusations against Cherokee "mixed-bloods" who lobbied against the Oklahoma bills. For example, see *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876* (Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1876), p. xii. For more on railroad lobbyist efforts to destroy Indian sovereignty, see H. Craig Miner, *The Corporation and the Indian: Tribal Sovereignty and Industrial Civilization in Indian Territory* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1976).

7. The social makeup and political world of the Cherokee Nation in the 1870s were certainly complex. The best scholarly account of the Cherokee during this time is William McLoughlin, *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty, 1820-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). See also an earlier study, Morris Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938). Unfortunately, both studies perpetuate the "full-blood" and "mixed-blood" dichotomy emphasized by the enemies of Indian sovereignty. These were constructs that Cherokee rarely used themselves but that appeared frequently in US government records. For example, federal agents broke down Cherokee population statistics by blood, recording that in 1879 there were 6,000 "mixed-bloods" and 8,000 "full-bloods" ("Affairs in the Indian Territory," US Senate, Reports, 45th Congr., 3d sess., Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1879, serial 1839, vol. 3, p. iii). Since government officials had no definite way of telling who had European ancestry and who did not, they often used cultural characteristics as a means to categorize people. Cherokee who adopted Euro-American customs, especially language, were assumed to have European ancestors. Of course, such

assumptions are based on the false idea that race determines culture, and for that reason I will not employ the terms "full-blood" and "mixed-blood" to put Cherokee into two different cultural groups. On the connections between "blood" categories and fluency in English, see Daniel H. Ross, et. al., "Remonstrance of the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole Delegations Against the Organization of the Indian Territory into a Territory of the United States," 28 February 1876 (Washington, D.C.: John L. Ginck, 1876), p. 21.

8. For a brief discussion of Boudinot's life, see Thomas Burnell Colbert, "Elias Cornelius Boudinot," *American Indian Quarterly* 13 (summer 1989): 249-59.

9. Adair, "Remarks" (note 1 above), p. 34.

10. Ibid. (Adair's emphases).

11. News concerning the activities of national delegates can be found in most of the spring issues of the *Cherokee Advocate*, especially the following: 11 March 1876, 25 March 1876, 29 April 1876, 20 May 1876, 27 May 1876, and 24 June 1876. The surviving copies of nineteenth-century editions of the *Advocate* can be found on microfilm in the Oklahoma Historical Society, Department of Archives, Oklahoma City, Okla.

12. For a more thorough examination of Adair's career, see Paul Kelton, "William Penn Adair: Cherokee Slaveholder and Indian Freedom Advocate," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 77 (spring 1999): 22-53.

13. William Potter Ross, "Remarks in Opposition to Bills to Organize the Territory of Oklahoma, by William P. Ross, of the Cherokee Nation, Before the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives," Wednesday, 8 March 1876 (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Brothers, 1876), p. 23.

14. "Protest by the Lawful Delegates of the Civilized Nations of Indians of the Indian Territory, (Herein Named), On their Behalf and on Behalf of the Indian Race, Against the Passage of a Law by Congress Transferring Them and Their Property to Military Control," 27 March 1876 (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Brothers, 1876), p. 1. In addition to the Adairs and Rosses, Joel M. Bryan and John L. McCoy also signed the document as representatives of the "Old Settler Cherokee," who were descendants of individuals who had migrated to Indian Territory before the forced removals of the 1830s. The Old Settlers did not form a political party of their own but did have some special interest due to treaties they alone had signed earlier in the nineteenth century. It is clear here that the Old Settlers agreed with the nationalist sentiments of the Downing and National parties.

15. Ibid., p. 2.

16. Ibid., p. 4.

17. Ibid., p. 9.
18. "Remonstrance of the Cherokee . . . Delegations" (note 7 above), p. 11.
19. Adair, "Remarks" (note 1 above), p. 34.
20. Ross, "Remarks" (note 13 above), pp. 22-23.
21. Joel M. Bryan, "Argument of Colonel Joel M. Bryan, of the Cherokee Nation, before the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives of the United States," 8 March 1876 (Washington: n.p., 1876), p. 3.
22. Adair, "Remarks" (note 1 above), p. 35 (Adair's emphasis).
23. Elias Cornelius Boudinot, "Oklahoma: An Argument by E. C. Boudinot, of the Cherokee Nation, Delivered before the House Committee on Territories," 3 February 1876 (Washington, D.C.: M'Gill and Witherow, 1876), p. 12.
24. Since the Cherokee government effectively forbade any pro-territorial organizations and prevented the publication of pro-territorial views in the pages of the *Advocate*, the size of this minority is hard to determine. Boudinot's supporters, perhaps exaggerating, claimed that "hundreds of men" supported territorialization. See: Unsigned to James M. Bell, n.d., Oklahoma University, Western History Collections, Cherokee Nation Papers (hereafter OU-WHC-CNP), Box 169, Folder 59. Although the minority was most likely composed of only English speakers and bilinguals, not everyone fluent in English supported Elias C. Boudinot.
25. Boudinot, "Oklahoma" (note 23 above), p. 20.
26. In 1869 federal officials had seized a tobacco company that Boudinot operated within the Cherokee Nation and arrested the enterprising man for failure to pay federal excise taxes. Boudinot appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, but in 1871 the justices severely disappointed him when they upheld his conviction. Psychologically crushed and financially bankrupted, Boudinot determined that Indian enterprise would only flourish when they received the same rights as United States citizens (E. C. Boudinot to Stand Watie, 10 May 1871, OU-WHC-CNP, Box 149, Folder 35).
27. Hubbard, "Argument" (note 6 above), p. 9.
28. Quoted in Thomas B. Colbert, "Prophet of Progress: The Life and Times of Elias Cornelius Boudinot" (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1982), p. 220.
29. William N. West to James M. Bell, n.d., OU-WHC-CNP, Box 169, Folder 59.
30. J. S. Knight to James M. Bell, n.d., OU-WHC-CNP, Box 169, Folder 28.
31. James M. Bell and Sut Beck, "Address to the Citizens of the Cherokee Nation," n.d., John Ross Papers, Folder 1319, Thomas Gilcrease Institute for American Art and History, Tulsa, Okla.
32. Boudinot, "Oklahoma" (note 23 above), p. 15.
33. Much has been written on the Black Hills gold rush, but an adequate overview of this event is Donald Jackson, *Custer's Gold* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), see especially pp. 81, 88, 107, 109.
34. Adair's commentary can be found in *Cherokee Advocate*, 19 September 1874.
35. *Cherokee Advocate*, 22 July 1876.
36. Ibid.
37. *Cherokee Advocate*, 5 August 1876.
38. Ann Bell Shelton to Mrs. Sarah C. Watie, 27 August 1876, OU-WHC-CNP, Box 158, Folder 4. When Ann referred to "cut off" she probably means extermination. In an undated letter, she wrote, "I often wish we had been exterminated and done with some years ago for that will be the end — and I have a horror of a long lingering death" (emphasis Shelton's). See: Ann to Uncle Jim [James M. Bell], n.d., OU-WHC-CNP, Box 169, Folder 74.
39. "Certain Concessions from the Sioux Indians," US Senate, Executive Documents, 44th Congr., 2d sess., Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1877, serial 1718, vol. 1, no. 9.
40. *Oklahoma Star*, 3 August 1876.
41. Ann B. Shelton to Mrs. Sarah C. Watie, 19 February 1877, OU-WHC-CNP, Box 210, Folder 127.
42. US agents only identified William Potter Ross by name, leaving it unknown who the "other Cherokee" actually were. One can assume that Adair did not want to see his rival and the National Party gain more prestige than the Downing Party and made the short trip to Muskogee. Moreover, the only surviving official record of this meeting does not record what the Cherokee or Lakota actually said. See "Certain Concessions from the Sioux Indians," US Senate, Executive Documents, 44th Cong., 2d sess., vol. 1, no. 9, pp. 19-20.
43. *Cherokee Advocate*, 21 October 1876.
44. Ibid.
45. Interestingly, Spotted Tail was indeed assassinated years after his return from Indian Territory. The motives of his assailant remain uncertain, but they do not appear to be directly related to the cession of the Black Hills. For an overview of this notable chief's life, see George Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).
46. *Cherokee Advocate*, 21 October 1876.
47. *Cherokee Advocate*, 9 September 1876.
48. William Penn Adair, speech before the Indian International Agricultural Society, Fifth Annual Fair, Muskogee, Indian Territory, October 1878, reprinted in *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 4 (September 1926): 255-74.



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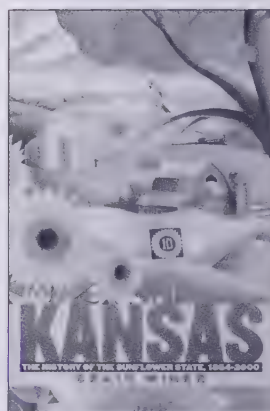
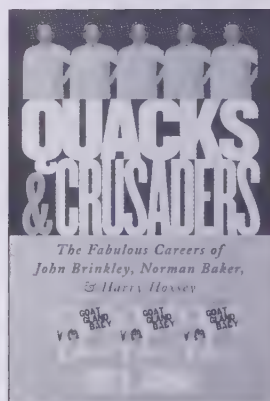
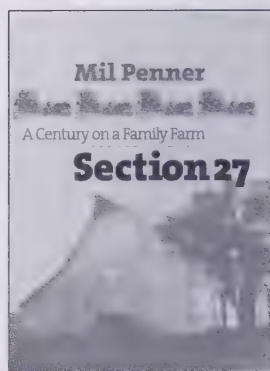
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# WAVING “A BOUGH OF CHALLENGE”

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BRIAN ALLEN DRAKE

Kansas is legendary for geographical monotony, for a landscape allegedly so absent of trees and relief that the state has become the butt of national jokes and a cultural synonym for flat. Kansas is not really flat; tilted might be a better description, for the state rises some 3,300 feet in elevation along the 400-mile stretch between Kansas City and Kanorado. Kansas is lacking in substantial tree cover, though, especially in its western third. US Forest Service researchers noted in 1999 that forests covered slightly less than 3 percent of

the state, concentrated mostly in the northeast and southeast corners. Such treelessness is due in part to the needs of the state's agricultural empire, but botanists, biologists, and ecologists tell us that environmental conditions play a more fundamental role. Basic ecology textbooks place most of the state in North America's temperate grassland biome, whose characteristic vegetation consists of great expanses of bluestem, buffalo, and grama grasses, and whose native trees are few and far between, confined mostly to riverbanks and isolated ridges.<sup>1</sup>

So prevalent is the idea of a treeless Kansas that few people are aware of the many concerted attempts, during its first seventy years, to forest the state artificially. The first white settlers in Kansas were as shocked by its lack of timber as any modern Easterner driving down Interstate 70. Yet those settlers were typical nineteenth-century Americans as well, steeped in contemporary beliefs about nature, agriculture, and progress, and so they attacked the treeless expanses with the devotion of crusaders. For five decades in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they dreamed about making a garden of the prairie, Kansans

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made serious attempts at forestry, trying to cover their state with the large and leafy groves that, to them, were an integral part of civilized life. They planted extensively on their farms and around their homes, formed their own state horticultural society in 1868, established two forestry experiment stations in 1887, and eventually attempted the creation of their own national forest from 1905 to 1915. All the while, information and advice about trees and tree planting circulated in agricultural bulletins, horticultural society reports, newspaper columns, and so on, as forestry became an obsession on the Kansas grasslands.<sup>2</sup>

That their efforts were generally unsuccessful is no surprise. Although trees can be grown on the Great Plains, its ecological character makes large-scale forestry in much of Kansas impossible, and the treeless spaces across the state's western third bear witness to the failure. Indeed, there is a temptation to snicker at the thought of Kansas forestry, and at anyone who would entertain such a concept in a land so ill suited to it. A more serious consideration of this effort, however, tells us much about settlers' views of the Great Plains environment. What motivated their grand forestry ideas and efforts in the face of such daunting environmental odds? Elliott West writes that whites came to the Great Plains with an idealized "vision" of a land civilized by towns, farms, and markets. Forestry efforts in Kansas reveal that the landscape itself was also an important part of this vision. For the state's settlers, trees and forests went hand in hand with towns, farms, and markets; a "civilized" natural environment was inseparable from civilization.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, I will explore the motives and efforts of the nineteenth-century Kansans who sought to turn the grasslands to forest. Those efforts were not always failures. Tree-planting Kansans did end up with respectable groves in the eastern part of the state, good shelterbelts and windbreaks throughout the center, and at least a few trees in the west. By the 1920s they had learned a great deal about which species to plant on the grasslands, where and how to plant them, and what horticultural

techniques would keep them alive and healthy.

But in the end the tree planters' ambitions far outstripped their achievements. Looking back on forestry's history in Kansas, state forester Albert Dickens claimed in 1928 that planted trees had "triumphed over the grass . . . and now wave a bough of challenge to the eternal prairie." The truth was less dramatic. Although they fantasized about forest acres numbering in the millions, Kansans never succeeded in covering more than a few thousand acres, a mere fraction of their state.<sup>4</sup>

The history of Kansas forestry, its successes as well as its failures, is part of the larger story of human interaction with the Great Plains environment. The history of the Plains, writes Donald Worster, paraphrasing Thoreau, "has been one of trying to meet . . . the expectations of the land," and Kansas forestry efforts in the nineteenth century give us a vivid example of this. Here, a people bent on controlling and shaping nature encountered a landscape that resisted their efforts and forced them, in the end, to temper their ambitions. Planting forests taught Kansas tree-planters about the expectations of their land, about the kind of agricultural activities the Plains ecosystems would allow, and about the ability, and inability, of humans to make the grassland into something it is not.<sup>5</sup>

The history of Kansas forestry begins with the land itself. "A grass covering," wrote historian James Malin in 1942, "is as natural to the prairie . . . as a forest covering to the humid east or jungle to the tropics." His observation still holds true today, though sixty years of subsequent scientific study have given us a few caveats. On the eve of white settlement, Kansas was indeed naturally grassy, and the standard argument says this was the result of a semiarid climate that limited tree growth outside riparian areas. But the story is really more complicated. Inarguably, Kansas was grassland when whites arrived. More precisely, however, it was a mosaic of diverse and ever-shifting grassland and grass-forest ecosystems shaped



by varying soil conditions and fire regimes as well as precipitation levels, and those variations were to have much effect on subsequent forestation efforts.<sup>6</sup>

The eastern quarter of Kansas is the wettest part of the state, receiving thirty-four to forty inches of precipitation per year. Andreas's nineteenth-century *History of the State of Kansas* tells us that over 90 percent of the area consisted of tallgrass prairie when white settlement began, but that number can be deceiving, for the dominance of those grasses was always somewhat tenuous. While often subject to extreme heat and drought, eastern Kansas is not dry enough to preclude the growth of forests. The tallgrass prairie relied largely upon fire, usually touched off by lightning but also set intentionally by native peoples, to maintain it by keeping woody growth down. Ecologist Daniel Licht writes that this area was "always a battle zone between forests and grasslands," constantly threatened by woodlands encroaching from the east, especially in wetter years. It was here that forestation efforts would be most successful; as settlers suppressed grassland blazes, tree cover in eastern Kansas spread, if not like wildfire, then certainly to a significant extent.<sup>7</sup>

It is in central and western Kansas that aridity really begins to assert itself on the region's ecology. The area near the modern Kansas-Colorado border, inside the rain shadow of the Rockies, receives an average of only eighteen to twenty-two inches of precipitation annually. Complimenting this are extremely high evaporation rates. Having lost their moisture over the mountains, the winds over western Kansas are so desiccated that they draw water out of the land; annual evaporation rates here exceed annual precipitation rates by a factor of nearly three to one. Not only does little rain fall, much of what does make it to the soil is quickly reabsorbed into the atmosphere. In fact, rain often never makes it to the ground in western Kansas during the summer, evaporating as it falls. Complicating things further is the fact that rainfall amounts across the whole of Kansas are highly variable

and severe drought a common occurrence, especially in the west. The state as a whole averaged thirty-two inches of precipitation per year between 1859 and 1973, but that number fluctuated wildly from year to year and from region to region. Over sixty inches fell on the state in 1951, for example, but only sixteen in 1860, with a dizzying number of peaks and valleys in the years between. In short, rainfall in Kansas is cyclical and unreliable across the whole state, and especially in the rain-shadowed western third, which in some years since statehood has received as little as a dozen inches of precipitation.<sup>8</sup>

The timberless ecology of central and western Kansas was above all a function of this aridity. Over the centuries and millennia, only those plants able to withstand the heat, the winds, and the wild fluctuations in rainfall could establish themselves. The moisture levels required for nonriparian forests simply did not exist here, and so the region became the domain of shortgrasses—little bluestem, buffalo, and grama grass, all drought-tolerant perennials. Fire still played a role, although its impact was limited due to the light fuel loads generated by those species, and soil conditions unsuitable for trees contributed as well. But lack of water was the area's most significant ecological characteristic, and "to all intents and purposes," Licht tells us, "the . . . shortgrass prairie was a treeless ecosystem." Grass was Kansas's ecological essence, and it would not always yield easily, a fact the state's tree planters would be quick to discover.

"Whether for health, wealth, or moral reasons," historian Wilmon Droze writes, "the day of the tree planter had arrived in Kansas . . . by the 1850's," and for sixty years afterward Kansans would plant trees with enthusiasm. But why try to change the grassland landscape so drastically? Early tree planting was often a response to physical necessity. Kansas's scant riparian forests largely disappeared into fences and firewood within a few years of white settlement. Railroads complicated the problem, as timberhawks scoured the countryside for ties

and fuel, and so initial planting efforts were often simply individual attempts to increase the wood supply. Kansans also hoped that planted trees would shield them, their crops, and their livestock from the state's severe weather. Simple aesthetic concerns motivated planting as well, as settlers circled their homesteads with trees in an effort to soften the austerity of the landscape and "the [allegedly] less attractive environment of the prairie farm."<sup>9</sup>

Pragmatism often mixed with loftier ideals. Planted forests offered more than firewood or a nicer view; they could protect the yeoman as he carried agrarian independence onto the grasslands. The author of an 1883 US Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on prairie forestry, for example, declared with Jeffersonian passion at the report's end that "it is with the hope of contributing in some way to this useful and beautiful pursuit, which is to shelter the bare and blistered earth: which is to catch and hold the rain and the dew; which is to shelter the home and its occupants from summer's heat and winter's cold; which is to bring fuel and comfort to the housewife . . . , that this brief report is submitted to reading and thinking people." Foresting the grassland could be a kind of patriotic act; to plant trees was to give succor to the farmer and his family, the republic's most vital citizens.<sup>10</sup>

These noble sentiments are especially interesting, for they hint at deeper, unspoken cultural motivations behind grassland forestry efforts. Nineteenth-century settlers came to Kansas with all the cultural mores of the age, and foremost among these was an almost religious urge to tame the "unsettled" wilderness with axe and plow. Euro-Americans had been landscaping the wilderness since Jamestown, and by the mid-nineteenth century "civilizing the land" was a commonplace idea that dictated newcomers' relationship to nature. Uncultivated land was worthless to most Victorian-era settlers, existing only to be improved by human effort, to be made submissive, productive, and aesthetically pleasing by the hand of man. The rural landscape of the

East had long borne the stamp of this civilizing urge, its large wild forests reduced by the late 1800s to much smaller and tamer versions sprinkled among fields and meadows. For Kansas's settlers, many of them born and raised in places like Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New York, the rural East no doubt embodied a kind of bucolic archetype. There, plowed field and tamed forest together formed an idealized pastoral landscape whose scenery was pregnant with agrarian beliefs and values. It was this Eastern-style idealized landscape—verdant, well-watered fields accented by leafy groves of trees—which they hoped to recreate in their new home state.<sup>11</sup>

Back east, civilizing the land and creating this pastoral landscape meant felling most of its trees, planting around the stumps, and harvesting the fruits of civilization along with corn and wheat. But on the Kansas grasslands the trees were already gone—untamed nature here took the form of horizon-to-horizon panoramas of bluestem and grama, not dark forests filled with wild beasts and men. How, then, to civilize it? Here, in an interesting cultural paradox, forests assumed the role of civilization's agent rather than its inhibitor. Beating back the austerity of the Plains required new civilizing tactics, and so planting trees, not felling them, became the key to making the grassland wilderness into a garden.<sup>12</sup>

All this required more than merely staking out farms and planting a few seedlings. Kansas was, of course, not like the agricultural East most settlers had left behind. It was hot, dry, and drought-ridden, and if it were to be pastoralized, it would have to be made wetter, more verdant, and more fertile than it was. The best way to do that, many Kansans believed, was through climate modification, or the idea that forests facilitated rainfall. A variation on the famous "rain follows the plow" concept, climate modification was a serious theory despite its seemingly whimsical, pseudoscientific aspect. There were many versions of it, but most revolved around the idea that forests, by stabilizing the soil and allow-

ing it to catch rainfall, in turn released that moisture back to the air through respiratory processes, which again fell to earth as rain, a process that repeated itself *ad infinitum*. Many believed that by planting large groves of trees on the prairie, especially in the drier parts of the state, Kansas's rainfall patterns could be increased and stabilized, its agricultural yields raised to cornucopian levels, and a life of pastoral abundance thus created on the formerly dry, harsh grasslands.<sup>13</sup>

The idea soon became a panacea for all of Kansas's perceived weaknesses, not only in terms of climate but in social and cultural development as well. Glen Marotz has noted that "planting for climatic change was promoted with almost religious zeal," and the amount of literature touting the ancillary social benefits of climate modification was enormous, from private letters to newspaper columns to federal publications. Forestry became a kind of social cure-all that would simultaneously bring the rains, tame the land, raise the cultural level of the populace, and make everyone rich, all at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

A prime example of this—we might term it "forest boosterism"—are the efforts of the Kansas State Horticultural Society (KSHS). Formed in 1868, the KSHS was the unrivaled champion of tree planting in Kansas, and its members took the first organized steps toward grassland forestry. Its coterie of middle-class farmers, businessmen, and academics met twice a year to discuss "the science and art of Horticulture" and swap information about their successes and failures, which the society published in its annual *Transactions*. Although concerned primarily with orchards and fruit production, forestry concerned the KSHS enough that it created a standing forestry committee and published annual *Reports* on its members' forestry efforts.<sup>15</sup>

The chair of the forestry committee and eleven-year president of the KSHS (1875-86) was Elbridge Gale, who came to Kansas via Bennington, Vermont, in 1864. A professor of horticulture at Kansas State Agricultural College as well as a Baptist minister, Gale wrote

extensively on grassland forestry and climate modification, and his observations give us a hint of the religious zeal that accompanied them. "Through the earnest prosecution of sylvaculture for this vast region," he enthused in the society's *Transactions*,

it may be made the home of millions of happy and prosperous agriculturalists, thereby adding untold treasures to the wealth of the nation. . . . [By] a neglect of this culture we leave it only to be the transient home of a few thousand cattle herders, an almost dreary waste forever, and hence the weakest portion of our great national domain. . . . The thought that rises highest, and is really the directing and leading consideration, is the modifying influence which sylvaculture is to have upon the climate at large; and hence, the influence which it is to exert upon the condition of the soil, and upon the standard of civilization which is to be found in this vast region in coming ages. The great questions of material, social and moral prosperity are here involved. Are we to rise to the demands of the age and of the nation, or shall we fall short of it [*sic*]?<sup>16</sup>

Gale's evangelical tone is revealing, for grassland forestry was much more than a way to make it rain. The many physical, social, and cultural improvements to be wrought by planting bordered on the miraculous, and there seemed no end to the benefits artificial forests would bring to Kansas. Some even argued, for example, that as the state's aesthetic character improved with planting, the manners and cultural sophistication of the people were certain to follow. "To cultivate a taste of refinement," maintained the *Miami County Republican* in 1872, for example, "nothing conduces more to promote it than the planting of a few shade trees."<sup>17</sup>

Taming the land could simultaneously fatten the wallet as well, and simple profit motivated tree planters as surely as did any mission of moral and cultural uplift. "Is there money,"



continued the *Republican*, "in planting forest trees . . . ? What signifies the beautying of our homes, the sheltering and protection of cattle, the modifying influence of the climate, the planting of forest trees to supply . . . timber, if the almighty dollar is not attainable?" The outlook, the newspaper assured its readers, was good. "[I]t will pay; on this we have sufficient authority to say it will return a good per centage for every day's labor or cost expended." The 1883 federal report on grassland forestry predicted that planted forests would "increase by millions the well-earned profit of [the] nation," and Elbridge Gale was confident that Kansas could "raise a crop of trees as certainly" as a crop of corn, "and in the end more profitably."<sup>18</sup>

Clearly the forestry urge in Kansas was a mélange of physical necessity, aesthetic ideal, moral imperative, and simple profit-seeking. Horticulturist John Warder summed up the goals of grassland forestry in an 1873 state agricultural report when he appealed to his countrymen to "wait no longer, but begin at once to plant forest trees." Plant them, he urged, "for their intrinsic beauty. Plant them for the shelter they afford. Plant them for their happy effects in modifying and equalizing the climate, in checking the force of the winds, and thus preventing excessive evaporation and cold. Plant them for their *utility* upon the farm. Plant them for patriotic purposes. Finally, if you can be touched by no refined statement, plant timber trees as a farm crop for their *profit*, which is demonstrable." Thus inspired, many Kansans, KSHS members in particular, began to plant apace in anticipation of the great social, cultural, and financial changes that were sure to come with the trees.<sup>19</sup>

The planting mood was infectious even outside Kansas, for the federal government took an increasing interest in grassland forestry during the 1870s and '80s. The USDA, for example, had investigated the possibilities of tree planting since the 1870s. It concluded in 1875 that "the continually increasing moisture in the atmosphere" resulting from initial plantings would guarantee that "but a short

period must elapse before all kinds of forest trees can be successfully cultivated on the plains." Three years previously, the federal government had actively encouraged tree planting with the famous Timber Culture Act of 1872. The act allowed settlers to claim and secure title to 160 acres of publicly owned grassland, provided that they planted forty of them with trees and tended them for eight years. The ultimate intention of the act was not just to bring settlers onto the land but rain as well, through climate modification.<sup>20</sup>

The Kansas government went even further than its federal counterpart. In 1887 it created a forestry commissioner post and set up two forestry experiment stations in the western part of the state. Located in Trego and Ford Counties, the experiment stations were a cooperative effort of the state government and the Kansas State Agricultural College, overseen by the forestry commissioner and dedicated to the promotion of "practical forestry." The idea of state experiment stations had been popular for some time. The *Kansas City Journal*, for example, suggested in 1884 that Kansas "forestry stations . . . after a few years' work in the right direction, would result in the art of growing trees." The KSHS had been pushing forestry stations for years, convinced that government support for tree planting was a matter of the public good. R. S. Elliott, industrial agent and timber specialist for the Kansas Pacific Railroad, had argued that "a few thousand dollars" of state money would be well spent on a state-sponsored tree nursery. "In ten years," he predicted, "for every fifty millions of trees then growing, the State will be ten millions of dollars richer." Aided by a handful of state employees and dedicated to producing those fifty millions of trees, the forestry commissioner was to supervise experiments in tree planting at the two stations, coordinate the free distribution of seedlings grown there, and report yearly to the governor on the stations' overall progress.<sup>21</sup>

By the late 1880s it seemed that the forestry juggernaut had begun to roll. With the government behind it, aided by the knowl-

edge and experience of the KSHS and sanctioned by contemporary cultural mores, it looked as if Kansas forestry might soon make the arid, treeless grasslands a thing of the past. Of course, there were a few dissenters. In a spirited speech to the KSHS, T. C. Henry argued that the state's "present atmospheric and climatic phenomena will never be materially disturbed by 'Kansas' forestry." In the East, he observed tartly, "the mountains and waste places reproduce forestry with surprising rapidity. . . . Here in Kansas, however, where nature has abandoned the attempt . . . our 'homesteaders,' with Quixotic hardihood, are attacking this problem *de novo*."<sup>22</sup>

But such sentiments were usually lost amid overwhelming enthusiasm, and the only question seemed to be not how much of Kansas could be forested, but how much *should* be. F. P. Baker of the USDA told the Kansas state board of agriculture in 1884 that "we must accustom ourselves to speak of a hundred or a thousand acres of [artificially planted] trees, just as we now do about so much corn." And in 1891, none other than Bernhard E. Fernow, chief of the USDA Forestry Division and predecessor to Gifford Pinchot, summed up the enthusiasm for prairie forestry in a speech before that same board: "It is forests that are wanted; not trees merely, but masses of foliage. The State of Kansas should have at least 10,000,000 acres of forest cover—real acres of forest." Fernow was ambitious, for 10 million acres was nearly 20 percent of the entire state. How many of those acres would actually become forested, however, had yet to be seen.<sup>23</sup>

Although contributors to its *Transactions* and *Reports* could be as grandiloquent as any Victorian poet, it was results, not rhetoric, that interested the Kansas State Horticultural Society. Planting trees was its primary mission, and Elbridge Gale assured members that "the best and surest way to establish the facts" concerning Kansas forestry was to "[begin] at once to plant." And plant they did. Many members of the society engaged in their own experimental tree planting, and there was a

brisk trade of information, tips, and advice about planting in the pages of the society's seven forestry *Reports*, published annually between 1880 and 1887.<sup>24</sup>

Suggestions about proper planting techniques, species selection, pruning, spacing, and a host of other concerns flooded into the KSHS from its members. They made the annual *Reports* a hefty read, each often reaching 100 pages in length as its editors crammed in every last shred of advice from the field. That advice, if often redundant and sometimes contradictory, was also enlightening, for it underscored the prerequisites for success in an unfriendly grassland ecosystem—selection of species appropriate to climatic conditions, proper planting techniques for each species, and judicious care of seedlings in drought, wind, and cold.

All this information and experiment seemed encouraging, and it looked as though large artificial forests were only a matter of trial and error and time. Elbridge Gale was particularly optimistic about the chances for success, undisturbed by an apparent lack of initial progress in planting. "To the casual observer," he wrote,

it may appear that there has been really little accomplished. . . . [Yet] when we look at the small beginnings to be seen . . . over the whole settled portion of the state, we must feel that they are significant tokens of the grandest results, to be realized at no very distant day. These small patches of timber are the innumerable host of witnesses who will settle forever, past controversy, the possibilities of forest culture in Kansas. . . . Hence, small as may be these scattered beginnings . . . by their success or failure [they will teach] us . . . how and what to plant upon a much larger scale in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Every year between 1880 and 1887, the Kansas State Horticultural Society's forestry committee sent out circulars to its leading members in each county, inquiring about existing forestry conditions and the progress of

their own efforts during the preceding year. Circular no. 2 (1883) asked, for example, whether "forest tree planting [was] a success in your county in 1882? What classes of trees were most extensively planted? What varieties promise the greatest success? What culture and treatment were given to them? What per cent failed? What were the causes of failure?"<sup>26</sup>

The circulars revealed that the volumes of planting advice in the *Reports* and untold hours of work by the planters had yielded some commendable results, although not nearly on the level anticipated by forest boosters like Gale. Not surprisingly, the greatest successes could be found in Kansas's moister eastern counties. Planters in eastern counties like Douglas and Shawnee were able to establish many good-sized groves composed of several different species, from which they could secure firewood, poles, and other small pieces of lumber. In 1880, for example, H. E. Van Deman of Allen County reported that the seedlings he had planted that year were doing very well. Indeed, he noted that the oldest planting in his county, composed of cottonwoods set in 1860, had reached an average height of forty feet and a diameter, at breast height, of eighteen inches. W. H. Litson concurred, noting that the oldest plantings in Butler County, five-year-old cottonwoods, box elders, and black walnuts, averaged twenty-five to thirty feet high and five inches thick at breast height.<sup>27</sup>

Moving west, results became more modest, though not entirely disheartening. W. B. Kritchfield of WaKeeney, for example, planted several varieties of trees in 1882, and he typified the experiences of KSHS members in the center of Kansas. "Forest-tree plantings," he reported in response to the 1883 circular, "where properly done, were a success. Varieties which promise the greatest success: Cottonwood, Ash-leaved Maple [box elder], Ash, and Black Walnut; evergreens, Red Cedar." There were some problems, however. "Under best treatment," he continued, "25 per cent failure occurred, and in cases where neglected the failure was of the entire planting. The main

causes were neglect, dry weather, and damage by stock." J. W. Bidwell of Ness County was more blunt, declaring that "the culture of forest-trees has not been successful," and he doubted its future potential.<sup>28</sup>

Results did not seem to improve over time, despite the perennial confidence of the planters. Data for plantings in 1880 looked nearly identical to those of 1887—solid success in eastern Kansas, diminishing success as one went westward, and notably limited success as one neared the Colorado border, where annual losses regularly topped 50 percent and complete failures were not uncommon.<sup>29</sup> In spite of planters' assertions that any failures were entirely the fault of the tree grower, the geographic correlation between planting successes and location suggests strongly that climatic limits, as much as improper or insufficient care, were a factor in the results.

Experimentation by its members yielded valuable information. In 1887 the KSHS felt confident enough to recommend the ten best trees for grassland planting (nearly all of them native species, not surprisingly), but it could not point to any successes on the grand scale hoped for by forest boosters. Rows and small blocks of trees could survive in western Kansas, if sheltered from drought, heat, and evaporation during their early years. But the great arcadian forests that had engaged the imaginations of men like Elbridge Gale were still only imaginings due to the formidable restraints of climate. By 1888, however, the state experiment stations had begun operation, and it seemed that official forestry might succeed where private initiatives had failed.<sup>30</sup>

Planting at the stations began on 27 April 1888 under forestry commissioner S. C. Robb, and in the summer of that year Robb reported to the state on his efforts. "No trouble has been experienced so far in maintaining a stand once obtained," he assured his superiors. "At least 98 per cent of all the spring stand" at the Trego station had "matured into good and useful seedlings." The Ford station initially had "a fine stand of tree plants" as well, though a hailstorm on 17 June "destroyed everything."



But by December, Robb acknowledged some difficulties with the grassland's ubiquitous aridity. In a supplemental to his report, Robb noted that the summer of 1888 had been one of western Kansas's "most trying seasons," marked by "unprecedentedly small" amounts of rain and very high temperatures. "There need be little wonder," he declared, "if some failures must be reported in trying to grow somewhat extensive forest trees . . . on the plains of Western Kansas." Despite his difficulties, Robb managed to ship some 500,000 free seedlings to 1,014 applicants, a feat he believed "demonstrates very clearly . . . that with proper management trees can be grown" on the grasslands. Many seedlings did die after shipping, and though applicants understandably blamed severe drought in follow-up surveys sent out by the commissioner, Robb believed those deaths were "actually caused by improper planting, cultivation, and care."<sup>31</sup>

The next season results improved somewhat under commissioner Martin Allen. The Ford station lost 50 percent of its initial crop to hail in June 1889, but by the end of the summer some 2 million free seedlings had been distributed to 4,175 applicants. Experiments with different tree species yielded largely negative results. Native species like cottonwood, box elder, black and honey locust, and osage orange had done relatively well in the stations' first year, largely surviving the dry heat of summer, and other species showed promise. Yet "not much short of one hundred other species," Allen noted in his report to the state, had "already been put on trial . . . some of which are already gone, others are going, and still others will fade away in the future—some near and others more remotely."<sup>32</sup>

The experiment stations continued to distribute seedlings until the late 1890s, with the results from each planting season being largely similar to those of previous years. Weather regularly assaulted the seedlings, killing large numbers of them. A considerable quantity survived to be distributed, and subsequent commissioners were upbeat in their reports. In 1892 George V. Bartlett informed his super-

riors that nearly all the reports he had seen concerning the fate of distributed seedlings expressed "perfect success in the growth of all varieties delivered." Failures, he claimed, were "entirely owing to neglect after transplanting by the grower." E. D. Wheeler argued in 1894 that in light of Kansas's still-pressing need for aesthetic improvement, evaporation reduction, and climate modification, "we must acknowledge the necessity for extensive tree planting" augmented by the experiment stations, despite problems with drought and mortality.<sup>33</sup>

Yet, notwithstanding the fact that they had achieved some success in raising seedlings, the experiment stations ceased distribution around the turn of the century. The reason, wrote assistant state forester William Hall in 1904, was "on account of the exceedingly meager results from it." He cited data showing that, of 2,880 seedlings from the first distribution in 1888, only 14.76 percent were still alive in 1904. Box elder seedlings had done fairly well, with an 80 percent survival rate, but green ash seedlings had only a 21 percent survival rate, and black cherry and white pine seedlings had all died. "In fact," Hall wrote, summing up the history of distribution, "there can be no results pointed to that are satisfactory."<sup>34</sup>

Hall did not offer an explanation for these mortality rates, but if the station's planting experiences were any guide, the harsh Kansas climate was the primary culprit. Despite their complaints about applicants' "lack of proper care" for the seedlings they received, even the state's forestry commissioners, all professionally trained horticulturists and foresters, could not avoid routine catastrophic losses from drought, hail, and the like. The commissioners, at least, had the state money and the labor required to replant. That ordinary farmers could not keep their trees alive, in the face of stern ecological limits and limited financial means, comes as no surprise. Indeed, Hall missed the fact that, after fifteen years of grassland life, it was remarkable that so many trees were still alive at all.



FIG. 1. An undated photograph of the state forestry station at Ogallah. Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.

In addition to distributing seedlings, the stations also did on-site tree planting to determine the relative fitness of different species. These experiments were far from grand—the results suggested little hope for large-scale plantings—but they offered a realistic assessment of grassland forestry, and a wealth of information on techniques for success.

An 1890 Kansas State Agricultural College bulletin, for example, discussed the relative merits of different conifers that the stations had planted and the best techniques for raising them. Red cedar, native to much of Kansas, was the best conifer for planting, “not specially on account of its beauty . . . but because of its general hardiness” and resistance to drought. Table Mountain pine also did well, though it never grew large or straight enough

to be anything more than an ornamental tree. Colorado blue spruce, native to the Rocky Mountains, did surprisingly well, scarcely seeming to “suffer a check under the worst weather that occurs in this part of the state,” if “given a fair start in planting.” White pine, on the other hand, often suffered severely from drought and heat, and Siberian silver fir was a complete failure, as were many other pines, several species of cedar, and six varieties of “Japan Cypress.”<sup>35</sup>

A 1910 Kansas State Agricultural College bulletin, authored by Albert Dickens, summed up the stations’ plantings in detail. Writing with obvious pride, Dickens was convinced of the “lessons . . . for the present and future settlers of Kansas” to be found in the stations’ successes, though he often glossed over its

many failures. Green ash planted in 1892, for example, "fought a good fight" against drought and what Dickens considered less than adequate cultivation. They were now the stations' greatest success, with a 90 percent survival rate, an average height of eleven feet, and an average diameter of four inches at three feet above the ground. Honey locust also did well, "given good care," and at the Ogallah station many had reached heights of twenty feet and diameters of five inches. Osage orange showed remarkable spunk, resprouting after a fire to reach heights of ten feet and a diameter of over two inches. Red cedar and Austrian pine fared similarly, the pines reaching heights of twenty-two feet and a diameter of four inches at four feet above the ground. Cottonwoods did not fare as well, represented "by a few dying trunks from which a few sprouts are growing." Dickens did not consider these results indicative of the species' potential, however, deeming it "worthy of regard." Finally, he mentioned the plantings of private individuals located near the stations, including the ten-acre Haywood plantation southwest of Dodge City, to augment the successes of the stations.<sup>36</sup>

The stations' plantings, despite their obvious successes, could not be said to be forests in the vein of Fernow and Gale's predictions. Pictures accompanying the text revealed their limited nature. One plate, for example, showed the Ogallah station's green ash plantings. Silhouetted against the prairie sky and surrounded by grasses and weeds, they seem small and unassuming in comparison to Dickens's glowing descriptions. The Haywood plantation, shown in another plate, fared better, approximating an Eastern-style grove, but it was the lone exception in a parade of rather humble photographs. Finally, Dickens's descriptions of the stations' successful plantings ignored the many failures that Commissioner Allen had noted in his annual report.<sup>37</sup>

In light of predictions about state forestry made just thirty years previously, the station plantings seemed anticlimactic. With proper nurturing and years of hard work, many vari-

eties of trees had been grown successfully and a good deal was learned about the proper selection of species and planting techniques. But these results were a far cry from the dreams of tree boosters; it seemed that grassland forestry was doomed, even with care and technique, to remain a small-scale occupation at best. By 1917 both stations had been shut down and abandoned.

Meanwhile, federal government forestry encountered its own problems in Kansas. The Timber Act of 1872, for example, had been a spectacular failure in the state and across the Great Plains. Initially, the act allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of federal land by planting forty of them to trees and caring for those trees for ten years, at which time two credible witnesses testified to the claimant's efforts and results. The forty-acre figure shrank within a few years, after complaints about its excessive financial demands, since prices for forty acres' worth of seedlings could run upwards of \$100. The figure then shrank several more times before the act's repeal, at which time it required only ten acres of trees, planted over several seasons. Thus made more manageable, the act became a popular means for land entries, and forest boosters had high hopes for its success. "The operation of this law," gushed a promotional pamphlet from Trego County in the late 1870s, for example, "will in a few years make [the] County the best timbered county in the State."<sup>38</sup>

On paper, the Timber Act seemed a success in Kansas; settlers entered 9,702,653 acres in timber claims by the date of the act's repeal, some 2 million of which reached final proof. Yet where were the forests? It was a lack of tangible results that had been behind demands to lower the acreage requirements and which eventually killed the act outright. Many acres had been proved up under the act, but few trees could actually be found on timber claims, leading to widespread charges of laxity, fraud, and corruption.<sup>39</sup>

The Timber Act was widely abused. It was far too easy for a settler to file a timber claim, make half-hearted attempts to forest it, with-



draw the claim and then refile under other homestead laws, if so inclined. Witnesses to claimants' efforts were often less than credible. Many ranchers used timber claims to fend off competitors, and there was the inevitable wave of speculation as profit-seekers traded claims in legal and not-so-legal ways. But climatic limits played a role, too. According to Paul Nieder, the act was "imperfectly fitted to the environment" of western Kansas, blind to the realities of grassland ecology, and even honest planting efforts were almost certainly doomed to fail. A few western timber claims did succeed—the Haywood plantation was a particularly good example—but "one thing is certain," observed Wilmon Droze. "The trees planted under the Timber Act were not very visible in the wide expanse of the prairie-plains."<sup>40</sup>

Undaunted, the federal government took grassland forestry efforts into its own hands in 1905 with ambitious plans for a 30,000-acre Kansas National Forest, to be located just outside Garden City. At the time, the idea did not seem far-fetched. The US Forest Service had had considerable success in planting trees on the Nebraska Sandhills a few years previously, and similar geography in the Garden City area led it to expect similar results there. Federal foresters were also the ultimate Progressive-era specialists, confident in their expertise and dedicated to efficient, scientific management of nature for the betterment of American society. A little aridity, they believed, was no match for professional training and scientific rigor.<sup>41</sup>

As in Nebraska, the Forest Service planned, after a period of experimentation with plantings, to sow the entire area with the most successful species. Climate modification was not a motivation—by now there was ample evidence that Kansas's rainfall patterns had not changed a bit since tree planting began—but hope for large forests remained. Locals, however, still believed the rains would come. The Garden City Industrial Club, for example, boasted that the Kansas National Forest would soon "be of incalculable benefit to this part of

the state, as it will undoubtedly exercise a marked influence on the climate, tempering the heat of summer and increasing the rainfall."<sup>42</sup>

Planting began in 1906, with two-year-old yellow pines, one-year-old honey locusts, and a variety of other seedlings, mostly osage orange, red cedar, and Russian mulberry, shipped from the Nebraska National Forest nursery in Halsey. Only 27 percent of the pine and 32 percent of the honey locust lived through the first season, and all other species failed completely. By March 1907 prairie fire had destroyed the remaining crop, but the Forest Service, undeterred, soon expanded the forest boundaries by a factor of ten, to 302,387 acres.<sup>43</sup>

Planting recommenced in 1908 and continued for several years, with an average of 125,000 seedlings set annually. But by March 1911, Willis Sorensen has written, "there were signs that the planting was not a success." An "extreme drought" during that month, in the words of forest administrators Carlos Bates and Roy Pierce, killed almost the entire planting, and subsequent efforts to replant with a larger proportion of drought-resistant conifers failed as well. Jack pine, for example, had done quite well in Nebraska, but in Kansas it failed "in a large measure due to the greater warmth of the region . . . , the more extreme drought conditions which may prevail, and the greater severity of the summer winds." Even the famously hardy red cedar died in droves.<sup>44</sup>

In the end, the Forest Service's experts—the best minds in their field, with a thorough knowledge of forestry techniques and the resources of government at their disposal—could not make the grassland of Finney County sprout large forests for any length of time, and they reluctantly admitted defeat. By 1915 the Kansas National Forest was finished, "a total failure," in Sorensen's words. Indeed, in 1923 the *Topeka Capital* noted acerbically that "all of the former Kansas National Forest is now grown up to soapweed, cactus, and clear, invigorating prairie air." The Forest Service temporarily converted the forest into a game

preserve, then returned it to the public domain for settlement.<sup>45</sup>

When all the boosterism, advice, and tree planting were said and done, how much of Kansas had been successfully forested? Bernhard Fernow's challenge to plant 10 million acres of "real forest" never came close to fulfillment. In 1881 the state board of agriculture reported that Kansas had some 92,839 acres of artificial forest composed of trees at least one year of age. By 1887 that figure had risen to 307,952, but by 1897 it had fallen to 146,601 acres. Five years later, in 1903, the total had increased to 162,564 acres, only to fall again in 1904 to 141,942 acres, after which the board no longer kept track. Even at their height, forestry efforts had succeeded in covering only about .58 percent of the state, a mere 3.07 percent of Fernow's ideal number.<sup>46</sup>

Measured against boosters' dreams, the results were terribly meager. It was an outcome not entirely lost on the state's tree planters, and in later forestry literature there is much more restraint than in writings like Elbridge Gale's. In a 1920 Horticulture Society bulletin, for example, one F. L. Kenoyer sounded the familiar call to plant forest trees in Kansas. On the surface the boosterish enthusiasm of years past remained, but the grand predictions of vast groves were gone. Kenoyer's ideal for the state was only 1.7 million acres, set out in shelterbelts, windbreaks, and five- to ten-acre woodlots—a far cry from the visions of Gale or Fernow.<sup>47</sup>

When the next forestry effort came to Kansas in the form of the New Deal's Great Plains shelterbelt program, one of its most significant characteristics was the attention its planners gave to previous planting experiences and the grudging respect they had for the grassland's environmental limits. Nature-dominating zeal, climate modification, and ideal pastoral landscapes were still a part of the program, but historical experience served to temper an excess of enthusiasm about potential acreage and subsequent effects. Few New Deal foresters imagined turning Kansas

into another Ohio or New York. This may be the most important lesson garnered from Kansas's great forestry experiment—an appreciation of environmental reality. They may have been ecologically arrogant, but the state's tree boosters also had the good sense to experiment, to listen to the grassland and discover what kind of forestation activities it *would* allow. When they did this, they and their New Deal successors were often rewarded with at least a modicum of success, if not with the extensive forests of a booster's imagination.<sup>48</sup>

Ironically, in some places forestry efforts, assisted by nature, nearly realized the original dream. One of the most drastic ecological changes on the Great Plains during the last century has been what Daniel Licht calls its "arborescence." Fire suppression combined with aggressive tree planting has increased woody vegetative cover dramatically in the area's moister regions. Even a casual tour through northeastern Kansas reveals that the modern landscape, averaging about 7 percent forest cover, bears less resemblance to typical prairie than to the farmland of southern Ohio or western Kentucky. With its fields, groves, and shelterbelts it looks, in fact, not unlike the ideal Eastern-style rural landscape of the nineteenth century. And reliable rain has come to the grasslands, too—not from climate modification, but drawn from aquifers and showered from center-pivot irrigation rigs onto fields bursting with grain and corn. Perhaps Kansas, or at least its eastern reaches, has been pastoralized after all.<sup>49</sup>

But pastoralization has come with a price, and much has been lost as trees have gained a foothold on the eastern Great Plains. The spread of forest ecosystems has played havoc with the region's ecology by fragmenting grassland habitat when not replacing it outright. The result has been the relentless spread of eastern forest species and a simultaneous decline in the diversity and numbers of native grassland animals, especially birds and insects. Sadly, one nonnative tree species, Russian olive, has spread so vigorously it has become a

serious pest. Of course, grassland agriculture has created problems of its own, from soil erosion to groundwater depletion to fertilizer runoff to overproduction, which make its long-term future uncertain.<sup>50</sup>

Forty years ago, Kansas historian James Malin (in an uncharacteristic moment of environmentalist reflection) argued that the successful occupation of the Great Plains could be "measured in terms of the ability to fit [human] culture into conformity with the requirements of maintaining rather than disrupting environmental equilibrium." Evaluated in these terms, Kansas forestry was largely a failure. The same might be said of much of the Great Plains' agricultural activities in general. Modern agriculture has brought wealth and prosperity to the Plains, or at least to some of its residents. And, like Kansas forestry, it has taken the creation of Edenlike material abundance, unrestrained by environmental conditions, as its primary mission. But hitched to an ideology of technologically intensive, ever-expanding economic growth and severed from ecological restraint, that agriculture has always been less interested in listening to the grassland than in forcing it to say what its champions want to hear. Perhaps the lesson of working within environmental limits might be utilized by those who would make the Great Plains bloom for the long term. The work of agricultural scientist Wes Jackson, for example, takes this lesson as a starting point, exploring techniques and crops designed to harmonize with the region's unique ecological makeup.<sup>51</sup>

"People do not master their environment," Elliott West writes. "They bargain with it." Kansas's great forestry experiment suggests the truth of this observation. Forcing a grand vision onto the natural environment of the Great Plains without recognition of natural limits often ends in failure, and even success does not always follow the cultural script. So, when a future generation waves its own "bough of challenge" at the grassland, whatever its guise, history tells us that it will best succeed if that bough resembles an olive branch.<sup>52</sup>

## NOTES

1. Earl C. Leatherberry, Thomas L. Strickler, and John K. Aslin, *An Analysis of the Forest Resources of Kansas*, Research Paper NC-334 (St. Paul, Minn.: USDA, 1999), pp. 3, 49. See also Gerhard K. Raile and John S. Spencer, *Kansas Forest Statistics*, 1981 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 1; G. Tyler Miller Jr., *Living in the Environment*, 10th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1998), pp. 172-74. The author would like to thank Donald Worster, Elliott West, Adam Rome, Kevin C. Armitage, and all the participants at the Hall Center Nature and Culture Seminar, University of Kansas, 25 August 2000, for their extensive comments and criticisms.

2. On immigrants and their cultures in Kansas, see James R. Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

3. Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), p. xxiii.

4. Albert Dickens, "The Forest Situation in Kansas," in *Trees in Kansas: Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1928), p. 7.

5. Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 251.

6. James C. Malin, "An Introduction to the History of the Bluestem-Pasture Region of Kansas," in *History and Ecology: Studies of the Grassland*, ed. Robert Swierenga (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 184.

7. Huber Self, *Environment and Man in Kansas: A Geographical Analysis* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), pp. 58-65; Alfred Theodore Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas*, vol. 1 (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), p. 35 and passim; Daniel S. Licht, *Ecology and Economics of the Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 81. Some geographers have argued that fire alone is responsible for Kansas's historical treelessness. See Philip V. Wells, "Scarp Woodlands, Transplanted Grassland Soils, and Concept of Grassland Climate in the Great Plains Region," *Science* 148 (April 1965): 246-49. Others have argued that the grasslands were entirely a creation of anthropogenic fire, though the evidence for this is controversial. See Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 84-99.

8. Self, *ibid.*, pp. 58-65.



9. Wilmon H. Droze, *Trees, Prairies, and People: A History of Tree Planting in the Plains States* (Denton: Texas Woman's University, 1977), pp. 6, 9, 3-18.

10. USDA, *Preliminary Report on the Forestry of the Mississippi Valley, and Tree Planting on the Plains* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 36.

11. On the sources of immigration to Kansas, see Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains* (note 2 above), pp. 1-14.

12. For the taming of wilderness, see Roderick Nash's seminal *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), especially chs. 1-3. Forests are heavily freighted with symbolic meaning, both positive and negative, in Western culture. For a detailed discussion of "forest symbolism," see Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

13. On climate modification through forestry, see Droze, "Trees, Prairies, and People" (note 9 above), p. 30; Walter and Johanna Kollmorgen, "Landscape Meteorology in the Plains Area," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 63 (December 1973): 424-41; and Paul Travis, "Changing Climate in Kansas: A Late 19th-Century Myth," *Kansas History* 1 (spring 1978): 48-58. For other, more outlandish theories on climate modification, see Clark C. Spence, *The Rainmakers: American "Pluviculture" to World War II* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

14. Glen A. Marotz, "Trees, the Plains, and Water Management," *Journal of the West* 22 (April 1983): 49.

15. This phrase originally appeared in the Kansas State Horticultural Society constitution and is reproduced on the frontispiece of its annual *Transactions*.

16. Elbridge Gale, "Forest Tree Culture," in *Transactions of the Kansas State Horticultural Society for the Year 1872 . . .* (Topeka: Commonwealth State Printing House, 1873), pp. 13, 15. For the history of the KSHS, see George Filinger, *The Kansas State Horticultural Society: One Hundred Years of Progress 1867-1967* (Manhattan: Kansas State University, 1968).

17. *Miami Republican*, 9 March 1872.

18. *Ibid.*; Elbridge Gale, "Report of Prof. E. Gale," in *Transactions of the Kansas State Horticultural Society for 1873* (Junction City: The Union Office, 1874), p. 97; USDA, *Preliminary Report* (note 10 above), p. 36.

19. J. A. Warder, "Forest-tree Culture," in *Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for 1873* (Topeka: State Printing Works, 1874), p. 268.

20. *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1875* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1876), pp. 336-40. On the Timber Culture Act, see Wilmon H. Droze, "Changing the Plains Environment: The Afforestation of the Trans-Mississippi West," *Agricultural History* 51 (January 1977): 14-16.

21. *Kansas City Journal*, 23 January 1884; R. S. Elliott, *Forest Trees for Kansas: A Series of Letters* (Lawrence, Kans., 1872), p. 5.

22. Speech of T. C. Henry before the KSHS, 6 December 1882, reprinted in the *Topeka Daily Capital*, 9 December 1882.

23. *Fourth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for the Years 1883-84* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1885), p. 649; speech by Bernhard E. Fernow to the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 15 January 1891, reprinted in *Seventh Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture 1889-90* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1891), p. 200.

24. Gale, "Report of Prof. E. Gale" (note 18 above), p. 100.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

26. *Fourth Report on Kansas Forestry by the Kansas State Horticultural Society for 1883* (Topeka: Kansas State Publishing House, 1884), p. 1.

27. H. E. Van Deman in *Second Report on Kansas Forestry by the Kansas Horticultural Society for 1880* (Topeka: Kansas State Publishing House, 1881) p. 37; W. H. Litson, *ibid.*, p. 40.

28. W. H. Kritchfield in *Fourth Report on Kansas Forestry* (note 26 above), p. 71; J. W. Bidwell in *Fourth Report on Kansas Forestry* (note 26 above), p. 62.

29. J. W. Bidwell, *ibid.*

30. *Seventh Report on Kansas Forestry by the Kansas State Horticultural Society for 1886* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1887), p. 28. Those species, in order of preference, were black walnut, western hardy catalpa, white ash, white elm, white maple, osage orange, cottonwood, box elder, honey locust, and red elm. Preferred conifers included red cedar, Austrian pine, and Scotch pine.

31. S. C. Robb, *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Forestry for the Year 1888* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1888), pp. 5, 11, 13, 14.

32. Martin Allen, *First Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Forestry, Kansas, for the Years 1889-90* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1890), p. 4.

33. George V. Bartlett, *Second Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Forestry, Kansas, for the Years 1891-92* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1892), p. 3; E. D. Wheeler, *Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Forestry for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1894* (Topeka: Press of Hamilton Printing Company, 1894), p. 18.

34. William L. Hall, "The Work of the Bureau of Forestry in Kansas" in *Transactions of the Kansas State Horticultural Society* 38 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1906), p. 283.

35. E. A. Popenoe, S. C. Mason, and F. A. Marlatt, "Notes on Conifers for Kansas Planters," *Kansas State Agricultural College Experiment Station Bulletin* 10 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1890), pp. 5, 7, 10.

36. Albert Dickens, "Report of the State Forester," *Kansas State Agricultural College Bulletin* 165 (Manhattan, 1910), pp. 299, 312-29.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 316.

38. "Trego County, Kansas" (Chicago: Warren, Kearney, and Co., n.d., probably 1878).

39. On abuses of the Timber Act, see C. Barron McIntosh, "Use and Abuse of the Timber Culture Act," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65 (September 1975): 347-62.

40. Paul Nieder, "The Timber Culture Laws in Western Kansas 1873-1891" (master's thesis, University of Kansas, 1966), pp. 47, 110; Droze, *Trees, Prairies, and People* (note 9 above), p. 27.

41. The seminal work on Progressive efficiency and scientific management of forests is Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement 1890-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).

42. Willis Conner Sorensen, "The Kansas National Forest, 1905-1915," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1969): 389; Garden City Industrial Club, "Garden City and Finney County, Kansas: The Gems of the Great Arkansas Valley" (Garden City: Morris Bros. Printers and Binders, 1905), p. 32.

43. Carlos G. Bates and Roy G. Pierce, "Forestation of the Sand Hills of Nebraska and Kansas," *Forest Service Bulletin* 121 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 24; Sorensen, "Kansas National Forest" (note 40 above), p. 389.

44. Sorensen, *ibid.*, p. 393; Bates and Pierce, *ibid.*, p. 38.

45. Sorensen, *ibid.*; *Topeka Capital*, 9 September 1923.

46. "Agriculture Statistics" in *Third Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for the Years 1881-82* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1883), p. 566; *Sixth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for the Years 1887-88*, pt. 2 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1889), pp. 77-80; *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for 1897 and 1898* (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1899), pp. 831-33; *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for 1903-4* (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1905), pp. 1028-29. Financial figures are revealing as well. Forest boosters were fond of claiming that Kansas would someday raise wood as profitably as corn. In 1887 Kansas produced wood valued at \$239,305. Corn values that year totaled \$26,836,422.70. By 1908 corn values exceeded \$82 million, and wood values had dropped to a mere \$102,989 (*Sixth Biennial Report*, pt. 2, pp. 11-14, 77-80; *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture for the Years 1907 and 1908* [Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1909], pp. 988, 1041).

47. F. L. Kenoyer, "The Farm Wood Lot: A State Asset," *Bulletin of the Kansas State Horticultural Society*, February 1920, p. 15.

48. Droze, *Trees, Prairies, and People* (note 9 above), pp. 3-47. See also Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 220-23.

49. Licht, *Ecology and Economics* (note 7 above), p. 61; Ronald L. Hackett, "Forest Area in Kansas, 1981" in *North Central Forest Experiment Station Research Note NC-298* (St. Paul, Minn.: US Forest Service, 1983), pp. 1-4. See also Leatherberry et al., *Analysis of the Forest Resources* (note 1 above), p. 3.

50. Licht, *Ecology and Economics* (note 7 above), pp. 52-81.

51. Malin, "Introduction to History of Bluestem-Pasture" (note 6 above), p. 66; Wes Jackson, *New Roots for Agriculture* (San Francisco: Friends of the Earth, 1980).

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# “THE GREATEST EVIL”

## INTERPRETATIONS OF INDIAN PROHIBITION LAWS, 1832-1953

JILL E. MARTIN

Highway 407 in Shannon County South Dakota crosses the Pine Ridge Reservation and, like the reservation, ends at the Nebraska border. When the road turns into Nebraska Highway 87 you enter the unincorporated town of Whiteclay. What also changes, besides the highway numbers, is the legal sale of alcohol. The Ogallala Sioux prohibit alcohol on their land, but this prohibition ends in Whiteclay. Seven liquor stores in this town of 30 residents, all of whom are Anglo-American, sell more than four million cans of beer each year.

KEY WORDS: alcohol laws, Indian country, Indian drinking, Indian law, liquor law, Ogallala Sioux, Pine Ridge Reservation, prohibition laws, Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, Whiteclay, Nebraska

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The two-mile stretch of road between Pine Ridge and Whiteclay is a path of alcohol related fatalities, injuries, and arrests that continue to plague the Ogallala Sioux who live on the reservation.

The federal government of the United States has always viewed alcohol consumption by American Indians as a problem, and one that needed to be solved by government officials. The United States has regulated liquor sales and consumption among Native Americans from the beginning of the republic until 1953. The forms of regulation have included fines and imprisonment for selling alcohol in Indian country, for introducing alcohol into Indian country, and for drinking alcohol if you were an Indian. Complete prohibition was tried, and continued even after passage of the Twenty-first Amendment, repealing nationwide prohibition.

The various changes to prohibition laws reflected the government's changing Indian policy. When confinement to reservations was the dominant approach taken by the government, prohibition laws regulated liquor on and around the reservation. When allotment and assimilation became most important, the law



reflected the changing status of the allottee Indian. National prohibition actually had little effect on Indian prohibition, except that non-Indians were now in the same situation. The New Deal brought in reorganization of tribes, and reflected the continuing desire of Indians for self-government in all areas. The policy of termination finally brought about the end of Indian prohibition. Now individual Indian tribes were allowed to regulate and prohibit alcohol through their own tribal councils, rather than being regulated from afar by the federal government. Many tribes in the Great Plains, like the Ogallala Sioux at Pine Ridge, adopted prohibition policies on the reservations.

Government policies have always reflected society's changing values regarding alcohol. The values were affected by how people looked at alcohol and prohibition. Indians and Euro-American whites had different interpretations of alcohol consumption and prohibition. The myth of the "drunken Indian" could be used to support many changes in the laws. In *The Social Construction of American Indian Drinking: Perceptions of American Indians and White Officials*, Malcolm D. Holmes and Judith A. Antell compared the perceptions about alcohol abuse by Indian and white officials on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.<sup>1</sup> They found that while both saw the same problems, they disagreed on its causes and how to solve the problems. Whites tended to view Indian drinking as a function of a morally degenerative lifestyle:

Throughout American history, whites' interpretations of American Indians have embraced (1) overgeneralizations from single tribal societies to all Indians, (2) conceptions of Indian deficiencies by reference to white ideals, and (3) descriptions of Indians guided by moral evaluation. Such beliefs continue to underlie popular stereotypes of Indians that tend to be negative, self-serving conveniences upholding whites' supposed superiority. Alcohol abuse in particular helped form whites' stereotypical conception of the American Indian and

provides evidence of Indian degeneracy and criminality.<sup>2</sup>

According to these beliefs, prohibition laws would be framed to identify and punish criminal behavior rather than used as a means of helping Indians avoid such behaviors.

Indians tended to view alcohol abuse differently. Alcohol offered by whites created the problem:

The introduction of alcohol is said to have disrupted tribal life and traditions. An indigenous theory of alcohol use indicates that rather than simply disinhibiting Indians, alcohol ruptured the communal and spiritual fabric of Indian life. Thus, the evil is located not in the nature of the Indian but in the character of whites who introduced it to Indian societies.<sup>3</sup>

According to this view, prohibition laws would be seen as trying to inflict the dominant white culture's solution to a problem it had created in the first place. In *Historical and Cultural Roots of Drinking Problems among American Indians*, the authors say that many Indians prior to European contact had no cultural context for drinking.<sup>4</sup> There were no acceptable Indian drinking customs or mores. And the people with whom the Indians were most in contact—soldiers, trappers, traders, miners—were poor examples of drinking behavior. Antisocial behavior and heavy drinking were common among these all-male groups often far from their families and other means of social control. So Indians were introduced to drinking, but not to "responsible" drinking.

These divergent views of Indian drinking are different interpretations of the same issue. Native people have viewed the changing prohibition laws as ways of destroying their tribal structure, thereby forcing them to assimilate. Breaking the law is one way to challenge the assimilationist position. Whites traditionally view assimilation as a positive development, and the policies adopted by the government in regard to prohibition support that view.

The myth of the drunken Indian also includes the belief that alcohol affects Indians differently than whites, and that there is some type of a genetic disposition to alcohol in Indians. Philip May in *The Epidemiology of Alcohol Abuse among American Indians: The Mythical and Real Properties* states, "This myth has virtually no basis in fact."<sup>5</sup> Multiple studies have found no difference in the way Indians metabolize alcohol. May's article examines twelve myths on Indian alcohol issues and shows that they are not based on fact, or that the statistics used can be read many ways. The fact that these myths exist shows that people tend to interpret facts to fit their preconceived notions.

This essay will look at the prohibition laws and cases interpreting those laws between 1832 and 1953. These laws and cases were applied throughout the Great Plains region as settlers moved westward and interacted with Indians. The same law could be, and was, interpreted different ways, as policymakers and judges reflected the white community values around them and fit facts to their preconceived notions and myths. Indian community values and perceptions were not considered in policy-making decisions, as laws are made by the dominant group. Yet the repercussions of these laws, cases, and policies still impact Indians and tribes today. Recent events in Whiteclay and the Pine Ridge Reservation show that the problem of alcohol and prohibition is still an issue today.<sup>6</sup> Alcohol sales in border towns continue to injure Indian residents who want prohibition laws to be enforced. Activists are calling attention to this problem and demanding that the state take action. An understanding of the history of the prohibition legislation will help us understand the roots of this important social issue.

#### THE ORIGINAL LEGISLATION

Early in 1802 President Thomas Jefferson asked Congress to pass legislation prohibiting liquor from Indians. This was done, according to Jefferson, at the Indians' request:

"These people are becoming very sensible of the baneful effects produced on their morals, their health, and existence by the abuse of ardent spirits, and some of them earnestly desire a prohibition of that article from being carried among them."<sup>7</sup> Such legislation would also benefit the white citizens of the country, Jefferson thought. He said in a message to the Senate and House of Representatives, "It has been found, too, in experience that the same abuse gives frequent rise to incidents tending much to commit our peace with the Indians."<sup>8</sup>

Congress agreed with the president and passed legislation to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes in an attempt to preserve peace on the frontiers. The bill authorized the president "to take such measures, from time to time, as to him may appear expedient to prevent or restrain the vending or distributing of spirituous liquors among all or any of the said Indian tribes."<sup>9</sup> This gave the president broad authority. Everything was left to his discretion—when to prohibit, what to prohibit, how to prohibit, and to whom it should be prohibited. The act also contained a description of what would thereafter be known as Indian country. It very specifically set out the boundary line between the United States and the Indian tribes, noting exact locations where the line turned. For example, the boundary began,

At the mouth of the Cayahoga river on Lake Erie, and running thence up the same to the portage between that and the Tuscaroras branch of the Muskingum; thence, down that branch, to the crossing place above Fort Laurance; thence westwardly to a fork of that branch of the Great Miami river running into the Ohio, at or near which fork stood Laromie's store.<sup>10</sup>

This detailed description, continuing for more than a page, would later be a source of trouble in enforcing the liquor prohibition laws.

Twenty years later Congress, recognizing that more specific regulatory legislation was

needed, passed a bill allowing the president to have traders' goods searched "upon suspicion or information that ardent spirits are carried into the Indian countries."<sup>11</sup> If ardent spirits were found among the traders' goods, the law required a forfeiture of all goods, with half the goods going to the government and half the goods to the informer.<sup>12</sup> Military officers, Indian agents, and territorial governors had the authority to search the traders' goods. These were the people who had regular contact with the Indians.

The issue of what counted as Indian country was now an important one: In one legal case, a licensed trader was convicted of introducing seven kegs of whiskey into Indian country for the purpose of selling it to the Indians. The defendant appealed his conviction, arguing that the jury instructions were improper because they included in Indian country "territory purchased by the United States of the Indians, but frequented and inhabited exclusively by Indian tribes." The US Supreme Court held that the instruction was improper because the purchase of the land by the United States took it out of Indian country.<sup>13</sup> The trader's conviction was overturned. Land on which Indians lived was not necessarily Indian country if the government had title to the land. This question of what was Indian country would continue to be argued in court.

In 1832 the Office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs was created by Congress, and the commissioner was given the responsibility of alcohol prohibition. The act creating the office included a prohibition clause: "No ardent spirits shall be hereafter introduced, under any pretense, into the Indian country."<sup>14</sup> The commissioner of Indian affairs soon realized that this act was not enough. It failed to provide for any course of proceeding if ardent spirits were introduced, and it provided no penalty. The attorney general expressed doubt that a proceeding could be brought under this statute.<sup>15</sup> The commissioner therefore recommended further legislation to allow the statute to be enforced:

The proneness of the Indian to the excessive use of ardent spirits with the too great facility of indulging that fatal propensity through the cupidity of our own citizens, not only impedes the progress of civilization, but tends inevitably to the degradation, misery, and extinction of the aboriginal race. Indeed, the substantial benefits of our policy towards the Indian tribes so essentially depend upon the entire exclusion of the means of intemperance from their country.<sup>16</sup>

Congress responded by passing an "Act to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, and to preserve peace on the frontiers" on 30 June 1834. This act superseded all the prior acts and had several components. It provided a penalty of \$500 for anyone who "shall sell, exchange, or give, barter, or dispose of, any spirituous liquor or wine to an Indian, (in Indian country)." If a person introduced or tried to introduce liquor to Indian country, he could be fined \$300. An exception was made for liquor and wine necessary for the officers and troops of the United States. If any federal government official had reason to suspect or was informed that someone was about to introduce liquor, it was lawful for the government official to search the person's stores and belongings, and if liquor was found, all the property of that person was seized and forfeited, one-half to the government and one-half to the informer. Additionally, any person employed by the government, on any Indian, could take and destroy ardent spirits or wine found in Indian country.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, the act redefined Indian country. It went to a simpler explanation, which would still create problems in the future as settlers streamed westward:

That all that part of the United States west of the Mississippi, and not within the States of Missouri and Louisiana, or the territory of Arkansas, and, also, that part of the United States east of the Mississippi river, and not within any state to which the



Indian title has not been extinguished, for the purposes of this act, be taken and deemed to be the Indian country.<sup>18</sup>

The act of 1834 would control prohibition in Indian country for the next 120 years. Although amended many times, this act was the backbone of enforcement against Indian prohibition. It was directed against those who came into Indian country with a harmful product, usually whites preying on Indians. In 1834 the act was not directed against the Indian, except to withhold from him the legal product of alcohol. Its purpose was to help civilize the Indian. After passage of the act in 1835, Elbert Herring, the commissioner of Indian affairs, noted that "The exclusion of ardent spirits, where it could be effected, has done much good: and on this exclusion, and the substitution of other pursuits for war and the chase, must depend their gradual growth and eventual proficiency in civilization—a consummation earnestly desired by every philanthropic mind."<sup>19</sup>

#### CHANGES TO THE TRADE AND INTERCOURSE ACT

It soon became clear, however, that the act was not without problems. C. A. Harris, the commissioner of Indian affairs in 1836, noted that the legal proceedings to punish someone for violating the act were "dilatatory and expensive."<sup>20</sup> He recommended again that a court be established in Indian country to try such cases, as they currently had to go to a territorial court. This would allow for faster and more efficient justice. He also pointed out that allowing agents of the government to take and destroy alcohol was insufficient, as there was no enforcement mechanism. William A. Harris, an agent of the Choctaws, reiterated that same complaint in 1839. He wanted it made the duty of every federal official to seize the alcohol rather than just giving him the authority, which he could choose not to use.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Street, the agent for the Sac and Fox, noted that without any force behind him, he

could not act: "The laws and authority of the United States are held in derision, when they know there is no power to enforce them by the military."—

In 1847 Congress took steps to amend the Trade and Intercourse Act. Penalties now included imprisonment, up to two years for someone convicted of selling liquor and up to one year for someone convicted of introducing or attempting to introduce liquor. In an important change of policy, Indians would be considered competent witnesses in these cases. The government also prohibited the distribution of annuities or goods to Indians while under the influence of liquor, or if the agent believed that there was liquor in convenient reach of the Indians. And no annuities were to be distributed until the chiefs of the tribe "shall have pledged themselves to use all their influence and to make all proper exertions to prevent the introduction and sale of such liquor in their country."<sup>23</sup> The concern was that when the Indians received their annuities, particularly when they were in the form of cash, the payments which were to last a year would be gone in a short time, spent on drink. Additionally, traders would advance liquor to Indians on credit and then take a large portion of their annuity cash when the Indians received it.

Obviously, traders were making money from selling liquor to Indians. Of course, there were always ways around the laws. The current law was based upon the location of the sale, or locus in quo. While it was not apparently Congress's intention, the prohibition was against sales in Indian country, not sales to Indians. So Indians residing on reservations east of the Mississippi River, within a state where Indian title had been extinguished, or in the territory of Arkansas, could still legally buy alcohol in local towns, unless there was a prohibitory state law. Commissioner George W. Manypenny complained in his 1853 report that

The traffic in ardent spirits with the Indians, to whom it is so demoralizing and

ruinous, still actively and extensively prevails; less however within the confines of the Indian country, it is believed, than along its borders, where there is no law, and no power on the part of the general government to restrain it. This traffic here is carried on with impunity by a set of lawless harpies, as reckless as they are merciless in pursuit of the ill-gotten gains to be thereby acquired. Some years since a strong appeal was made by the head of this department to the authorities of several of the frontier States, for the purpose of endeavoring to procure such legislation on the part of those States as would tend to this widespread evil, but without success. Hence it still flourishes in violation of all law, human and divine; the fruitful source of crime and untold misery, and the frequent cause of serious brawls and disturbances upon the frontiers, as well as within the Indian country.<sup>24</sup>

This was still a problem in 1861, as Commissioner William P. Dole reported: "Unprincipled traders, debarred by law from going upon the reservations, gather upon their borders, and by means of this traffic which in this case is far worse than robbing, they filch from the Indian his little all, often reducing him to a state of utter want and destitution. To protect him from the cruel avarice of the whites, more effectual legislation should, if possible, be had."<sup>25</sup> This theme was reiterated by the superintendents in their individual reports. Superintendent William H. Rector of Oregon wrote about his increasing concern now that gold had been discovered and white adventurers were coming into the territory: "A great many *enterprising* individuals with limited capital have established themselves at trading posts in the vicinity of the reservations, and contend that, inasmuch as they are not *on the reserve*, that the agent cannot interfere or molest them; yet the evil consequences which result from their presence is as keenly felt as if the trader was firmly established in the agent's house, and acting under authority

of law."<sup>26</sup> The superintendent of the Northern Superintendency based in Minnesota, wrote, "The Winnebagoes [who would later be moved to the Nebraska territory] occupy an unenviable position. They are surrounded on all sides by those too willing to traffic in whiskey, and whom the law appears to be inadequate to punish; and should one be arrested, he may be proved guilty of the act of selling intoxicating liquors to the Indian; but upon some technicality, or flaw in the law or proceedings he is discharged without punishment."<sup>27</sup>

Congress listened to Commissioner Dole and proposed a bill to make it a crime to provide spirituous liquor or wine "to any Indian under the charge of any Indian superintendent or Indian agent appointed by the United States" or to introduce or attempt to introduce spirituous liquor or wine into Indian country.<sup>28</sup> Debate in the Senate focused on an amendment that would have made it a crime to introduce or attempt to introduce liquor into Indian country with the intent to dispose of it to the Indians. Some senators wanted to be sure to protect white settlers traveling through Indian country who might have alcohol with them intending to use it themselves. Mr. Wallace was concerned that without the intent amendment, "citizens who might have liquor in their houses for medicinal or other purposes would violate this law and be subject to its penalties."<sup>29</sup> Mr. Stevens spoke against the intent amendment. He understood that intent was hard to prove, and very subjective, and that it would make the law easier to get around:

I found that these traders would start to carry whisky across the Indian territory to some other place; that whenever they got about half the way through they would, unfortunately, be attacked by a set of ruffians—and they were always attacked—who seized the liquor and used it there and afterwards magnanimously paid these men for it; but inasmuch as they could show that they started with the liquor to go through

the territory, and with no intention of selling it to the Indians, no one of them could be prosecuted to conviction.<sup>30</sup>

The intent amendment failed, but it showed that Congress was as concerned about protecting the white settlers' right to have and consume alcohol as it was to prevent the Indians from having access to it.

Senators also discussed a continuing provision of the law which allowed liquor to be taken into Indian country under the direction of the Department of War, that is, "such supplies as shall be for the officers of the United States and troops of the service."<sup>31</sup> Mr. Lovejoy supported it, as the troops needed it for medicinal purposes.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Cox was opposed to allowing the War Department to have anything to do with alcohol and the Indians. The use of alcohol was a continuing problem among the United States troops. Boring, unrelieved duty in Indian country led to drinking, and some of this drinking was sanctioned by the army. Daily alcohol rations were given to troops. Mr. Cox stated, "I am very jealous of giving any power to the War Department, even as to this matter of sending liquor among the Indians. I distrust anything they do in the Indian country. And I can demonstrate at some other time the pernicious influences which result from the conduct of our Army officers in the Indian territory; and that too, in spite of the efforts of our Indian agents to produce a better state of things among the Indians."<sup>33</sup> But Congress did not want to prevent white soldiers from getting liquor. The War Department exception continued in the law. These soldiers and officers were among the people who were showing the Indians white drinking practices.

The overall bill, prohibiting the sale of alcohol to any Indian under the charge of an Indian agent, was intended to solve the problems of the border towns. It was now illegal to sell to an Indian, though it still was not illegal for an Indian to buy alcohol. It was the usually white seller who was to be controlled.

#### WESTWARD EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW

This was the status of the law in the decades following the Civil War, during a period of westward expansion. Colorado, Nevada, Dakota, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming Territories were all created between 1861 and 1868. The United States made treaties with the Indian tribes until congressional legislation in 1871 ended treaty making with tribes.<sup>34</sup> The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed citizens or intended citizens to select 160 acres of unappropriated public land and acquire title to it after five years by making improvements on the land.<sup>35</sup> "Unappropriated public land" was often land ceded by the Indians in treaties with the US government. The Indians in the West were slowly being forced onto reservations. By 1891, at Wounded Knee, the last of the tribes had fully surrendered to the greater military power of the United States. During this period, as interactions between whites and Indians grew, problems with alcohol also grew. Interactions with whites meant access to alcohol, as alcohol was not prohibited to whites. And there were always whites willing to sell alcohol to Indians.

Enforcement of the laws was a problem. The Indian agents wanted to eliminate alcohol on the reservations, calling it "the greatest evil with which the Indians have to contend"<sup>36</sup> and "that infernal source of demoralization and ruin of the Indian race."<sup>37</sup> But they had no military force behind them, and requested assistance to enforce the law. Brevet Major Jno. N. Craig, the agent for the Cherokees, stationed at Fort Gibson in Indian Territory, asked for cavalry, in addition to infantry, as a way of enforcing the law:

The services of mounted troops, none of which are at present stationed within or near this Territory, are required as it is only by patrolling the roads the persons engaged in it are accustomed to traverse, that it can be even measurably interrupted. For this



service, and the pursuit and arrest of offenders against the laws generally, the presence of a troop of cavalry, in addition to the company of infantry stationed here, is urgently required at Fort Gibson.<sup>38</sup>

Infantry troops, in the broad expanse of the West, were generally not helpful. So the means to enforce the laws were not always provided even to those who wanted to enforce them.

Even when troops were present, however, they did not always assist the agents in prohibiting the sale of liquor. The troops themselves often got drunk and added to the liquor problem. Vincent Colyer, a Special Indian Commissioner on the Board of Indian Affairs, commented on problems he had found at Fort Gibson, Cherokee Territory. He had observed drunken soldiers on several occasions, both day and night. On one occasion four drunken soldiers went into a Cherokee meetinghouse during Sunday services and disrupted the services, waving guns and shouting and swearing.<sup>39</sup> Colyer wrote, "The explanation of this disorderly conduct was that the paymaster had been around a few days before. How long would our city people content themselves with such an excuse as this, if their police should conduct themselves in that way whenever they were paid?"<sup>40</sup>

Enforcement was also a problem because of the problem of evidence. It wasn't illegal for the Indian to drink, so finding an intoxicated Indian only told the marshal that someone had violated the law by selling or giving it to the Indian. Finding out who had violated the law was a problem. Agents complained repeatedly that the Indian would not testify, even though the law made Indians competent witnesses in these matters. Agent Harold J. Cole at the Colville Agency in Washington wrote, "The Indians very rarely give information which will lead to the arrest of the party or parties furnishing them these intoxicants. When questioned as to where or from whom they purchased the liquor, they will usually say they do not know who the white man was."<sup>41</sup> John Roberts, the agent at the Pueblo

and Jicarilla Agency in Santa Fe, had the same complaint: "I have used every endeavor to discover the parties engaged in this business, but hitherto have not been able to obtain evidence sufficient to secure a conviction. I will not relax my efforts towards discovering the guilty parties in this matter, though it is impossible to induce an Indian to confess from whom he obtained liquor."<sup>42</sup> Apparently some Indians did not want to reveal where they had gotten their liquor, for if their seller was convicted, they could no longer obtain liquor from him.

Getting juries to convict was also a problem. The seller of liquor was often a reputable businessman in the community. Regardless of what the law said about the competency of Indians as witnesses, prosecutors did not want to bring an action against a local businessman based on the word of an Indian. Agent George W. Harper of the Umatilla Agency in Oregon wrote, "It is the drunken Indian's word against the white man, and an Indian's word placed on the scale against the word of a respectable white saloon keeper amounts to nothing."<sup>43</sup> The agent at Fort Peck Agency in Montana was preparing to prosecute a case against a member of the state legislature of Montana, accused of introducing liquor on the reservation,<sup>44</sup> and in Choctaw County in Oklahoma it was the county attorney and a prominent businessman who were apprehended for introducing liquor.<sup>45</sup>

The punishment rendered was often not enough to make the person stop selling liquor. The list and table of crimes compiled in the commissioner's report in 1892 lists the following dispositions for selling liquor: \$1 fine and one day in jail, \$50 fine and thirty days in jail, \$25 fine and one day in jail, and two \$1 fines. The agent at Colville Indian Agency in Washington weighed in on the matter: "The law does not seem adequate to the proper punishment of these criminals. Many are sentenced to pay a small fine, which they can easily do, and then return and follow their old trade. It is quite a difficult matter to convict on Indian evidence, and it does seem that when a con-

viction is had they should receive at least a term in State's prison."<sup>46</sup> Even when prison was the punishment, it did not seem to deter the crime: "Conviction has been obtained in a number of cases, ranging from six months to two years in the State prison at Walla Walla, but it does not seem to deter others. There is a large profit in the traffic, and no matter how severe the punishment there are others, it seems, who are willing to engage in it."<sup>47</sup> As long as the business was profitable, the punishment low, and public opinion not against them, people would continue to sell liquor to Indians.

#### THE COURTS' DECISIONS

The courts of the United States also were involved with enforcing the law. Various arguments were made by defendants regarding the definition of Indian country, including whether Indians allotments were Indian country, the definition of spirituous liquor, and whether sale of liquor to an Indian who had received an allotment was prohibited. The interpretation given to the law by each judge made a difference in the defendant's guilt or innocence. The same law was interpreted many different ways.

#### WHAT IS INDIAN COUNTRY?

We have seen that the act of 1834 defined Indian country in the United States, but what of land that was not part of the United States in 1834, land in what would become the states of Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska? Did that land become Indian country when it became part of the United States? Was the land that the United States had received through treaties with the Indians still Indian Country? Different courts had different answers, depending on the specific facts of the case.

The District Court in *United States v. Seveloff* found that the law did not apply to land that had been acquired by the United States after 1834.<sup>48</sup> A defendant sold liquor in

Sitka, Alaska, to an Indian. He argued that Alaska was not Indian country as defined by the law, and therefore the District Court did not have jurisdiction over him. The court agreed. It found that the law on its face would not be extended to lands the United States later acquired. In fact, "it was purely a local law, and contained no provision by which it should in the future be extended in any direction—as to California or Alaska—upon the contingency of their acquisition by the United States."<sup>49</sup> The defendant was let off. The US attorney general agreed with this disposition. In an opinion issued 12 August 1873 to the Department of Justice, the attorney general noted that when Oregon Territory was added to the country, Congress assumed it was not Indian country and specifically provided that the Indian trade and intercourse act would apply to Indians in Oregon.<sup>50</sup> This same thing was done when the United States created the territories of Utah and New Mexico. The attorney general concluded,

From this legislation it would seem that, in the view of Congress, the Indian country west of the Mississippi, as defined in the act of 1834, was originally limited to the territory then belonging to the United States situated between that river and the Rocky mountains, and not within the States of Missouri and Louisiana or the Territory of Arkansas. Respecting that part of the Indian country, it was the understanding of the framers of the act of 1834 that the limits thereof could only be changed by legislative enactment.<sup>51</sup>

Congress also would include the prohibition on alcohol in treaties that applied to land the Indians ceded to the government. This was intended to protect the Indians on land adjoining the reservations. In *United States v. Forty-three Gallons of Whiskey, etc.*, a white man was arrested for bringing liquor onto land that had been ceded to the United States by the Treaty with the Red Lake and Pembina Bands of Chippewa Indians.<sup>52</sup> The

treaty contained specific provisions that the laws of the United States prohibiting the sale and introduction of spirituous liquor would continue in full force and effect throughout the country ceded. So in this case, even though the Indians had parted with their title, it was still Indian country under the treaty for this purpose. The Supreme Court found:

As long as these Indian remain a distinct people, with an existing tribal organization, recognized by the political department of the government, Congress has the power to say with whom, and on what terms, they shall deal, and what articles shall be contraband. If liquor is injurious to them inside of a reservation, it is equally so outside of it; and why cannot Congress forbid its introduction into a place near by, which they would be likely to frequent? It is easy to see that the love of liquor would tempt them to stray beyond their borders to obtain it; and that bad white men, knowing this, would carry on the traffic in adjoining localities, rather than venture upon forbidden ground.<sup>53</sup>

The court recognized that the Indians were aware of the perils of alcohol and wanted to be protected by the treaty.

The land in question in *Bates v. Clark* was in Dakota Territory.<sup>54</sup> There was no specific provision in any treaty to extend prohibition onto ceded lands. Bates, a captain in the army, was being sued by Clark, the owner of a general mercantile business in Dakota Territory. The army had seized whiskey owned by Clark, as being in Indian country, and Clark sued to recover damages. The Supreme Court found the land was not Indian country and the army officers were liable in an action for trespass:

The simple criterion is that as to all the lands thus described it was Indian country whenever the Indian title had not been extinguished, and it continued to be Indian country so long as the Indians had title to it. . . . As soon as they parted

with the title, it ceased to be Indian country, without any further act of Congress, unless by the treaty by which the Indians parted with their title, or by some act of Congress, a different rule was made applicable to the case.<sup>55</sup>

So whether land ceded by the Indians remained as Indian country depended upon the treaty negotiations between the government and the tribe.

#### ALLOTMENTS

The General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, which was passed in 1887, changed the policy of the United States to one of allotments.<sup>56</sup> It had a significant impact on Indian ownership of land in Indian country. Under the General Allotment Act, each adult male Indian was allotted 160 acres of reservation land for his own. The allottee received a patent to the land for twenty-five years, which he could not sell or alienate, and he became a citizen. He received title to the land at the end of the twenty-five years. Proponents argued that allotments would move the Indians along on the path of civilization. Many people believed that the breaking up of the tribal and communal existence was the best way to advance and "civilize" the Indians. Once the Indian received his own land, and received all the benefits from working his own land, he would realize the benefits of capitalism over communalism, and would be on the road to assimilation. And once allotments were made to all tribal members, the "excess" land on the reservation was sold to white settlers, opening prime real estate to settlement.

But the question arose as to the status of the allottee Indian. Once they were citizens, were they still Indians under the control of the superintendent or agent? If not, then Indian prohibition laws should not apply. And unless there was a specific treaty provision, the unallotted lands sold to settlers would not be Indian country, meaning the Indian allottees would generally be surrounded by



non-Indian country. So an argument could be made that allotted lands were not Indian country and that Indian allottees were not under the control of the agent, and, therefore, the Indian prohibition laws did not apply.

The agent at Neah Bay Agency in Washington wrote about this problem. "It would appear that many of them in becoming citizens had no higher object in view than to gain their freedom from agency control, so as to free themselves from an objectionable wife or to gain the white man's privilege of getting beastly drunk."<sup>57</sup> Congress amended the Trade and Intercourse Act in 1897, making it illegal for anyone to sell any type of intoxicant to "any Indian to whom allotment of land has been made while the title to the same shall be held in trust by the government" and refining the definition of Indian country, "which term shall include any Indian allotment while the title to the same shall be held in trust by the Government, or while the same shall remain inalienable by the allottee without the consent of the United States."<sup>58</sup> The Indian Service was happy. "Much good is expected to result from the passage of this law, especially to the Indian allottees of the far Northwest where the courts have held that the laws on the subject did not prohibit the sale of liquors to allottees."<sup>59</sup>

This new definition of Indian country was challenged in the courts. Farrell sold liquor to a mixed-blood Sioux Indian in South Dakota who had received an allotment before the act of 1897. Farrell argued that the act was unconstitutional, as the Sioux had become a citizen before the act passed.<sup>60</sup> The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals found otherwise. The court agreed that the Sioux was a citizen but pointed out that the right to buy liquor is not necessarily a right of citizenship. Some states had their own prohibition laws preventing anyone from buying alcohol. Others had age limits on the use of alcohol. The government was allowed to regulate on the Indian's behalf, the court found. It stated:

The truth is that the deprivation of these Indians of the right to buy intoxicating liquors is not the taking away from them of any privilege or immunity of citizenship, but it is an attempt to confer upon them an additional immunity which some citizens do not possess,—an immunity from drunkenness and its pernicious consequences. The government then had the power to retain its control over this baneful traffic with these Indians, and its retention is not inconsistent with its grant to them of the rights, privileges and immunities of citizenship.<sup>61</sup>

The US Supreme Court did not agree. In *Matter of Heff*, the court considered a case with similar facts.<sup>62</sup> Heff was convicted of selling liquor to an Indian in Kansas who had received his allotment in severalty under the General Allotment Act. Heff appealed, arguing that the Indian buyer was a citizen of the state and the United States, so the law did not apply. The Supreme Court found that allotment made the Indian a citizen of the state and subjected him to the laws of the state. Regulating liquor is something normally done by the state under its police power. If the power was held by the state, the federal government could not regulate in that area, and the act of 1897 therefore cannot apply. The court wrote,

We are of the opinion that when the United States grants the privileges of citizenship to an Indian, gives to him the benefit of and requires him to be subject to the laws, both civil and criminal, of the State, it places him outside the reach of police regulations on the part of Congress; that the emancipation from federal control thus created cannot be set aside at the instance of the Government without the consent of the individual Indian and the state, and that this emancipation from the Federal control is not affected by the fact that the lands it has granted to the Indian are granted subject to a condition against alienation

and encumbrance, or the further fact that it guarantees to him an interest in tribal or other property.<sup>63</sup>

The court was interpreting the law as it was written and was not interested in the policy behind the prohibition. This didn't mean however, that the federal government couldn't use other ways to control liquor. Many Indian treaties had specific provisions limiting the use of alcohol on reservations, and indeed on ceded and allotted land. One such example was the Treaty with the Nez Perce, made in 1894, which included a provision that the lands ceded by, and retained and allotted to the Nez Perce, and the Nez Perce allottees, would be subject to the laws prohibiting the introduction of liquor into Indian country for the next twenty-five years.<sup>64</sup> The Supreme Court agreed that this provision took it out of the *Heff* situation. In *Dick v. United States*, Dick, an Indian allottee, purchased whiskey in a town that had been in the boundaries of the Nez Perce reservation but was now an organized village in the state of Idaho.<sup>65</sup> He argued it was not Indian country, so that law did not apply. The Supreme Court found that the provision in the treaty had been negotiated for the benefit of the Indians, to protect them from "the pernicious influences that would come from having the allotted lands used by citizens of the United States as a storehouse for intoxicants."<sup>66</sup> The treaty was negotiated before the Indians became state citizens upon receiving their allotments, so the decision was within the power of Congress, as the Indians were at that time within Congress's exclusive jurisdiction.

The 1858 treaty with the Yankton Sioux creating their reservation in South Dakota, raised in *Perrin v. United States*, contained even more prohibitory language. It stipulated that no intoxicating liquors would ever be sold or given away upon lands ceded by the Sioux to the United States.<sup>67</sup> The court found that the language continued through the allotment period and applied to lands held by whites in private ownership that had been ceded by the

tribe. This language was to continue to protect the Indian inhabitants.

The *Heff* case was officially overruled in *United States v. Nice* in 1916.<sup>68</sup> The defendant sold whiskey to an allottee Indian in South Dakota. The court discussed the power of Congress to regulate the commerce of Indian tribes as "well settled": "Its source is two fold; first the clause in the Constitution expressly investing Congress with authority 'to regulate commerce . . . with the Indian tribes,' and, second, the dependent relation of such tribes to the United States."<sup>69</sup> In overruling *Heff*, the court found, "As, therefore, these allottees remain tribal Indians and under national guardianship, the power of Congress to regulate or prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquor to them, as it does by the act of 1897, is not debatable."<sup>70</sup> The commissioner of Indian affairs referred to *Nice* as "the case of most importance," as it allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to enforce liquor regulations on all Indians, allotted or not.<sup>71</sup>

#### WHAT IS SPIRITUOUS LIQUOR?

The act of 1834 placed prohibitions on spirituous liquor, and amendments prohibited ardent spirits. Wine was later added to the prohibition. What exactly was being prohibited? The question came to the forefront when beer began to be distributed in Indian country. Did beer fall within the definition of "spirituous liquors"? Court opinions differed. The District Court in Montana found that beer was not a spirituous liquor, and based its decision using the definition in Webster's dictionary.<sup>72</sup> Spirituous liquors were liquors "produced by distillation" and fermented liquors were not included. The court recognized that the policy was to prevent intoxicants, but as it was a penal statute, believed it must be strictly construed: "A court has no right to interpolate words into it, or to give a different meaning to words used from what are their natural import as commonly used."<sup>73</sup> In the District Court of Arkansas, Judge Parker went into a lengthy explanation,

in his charge to the jury, why lager beer did fall within the definition of spirituous liquors.<sup>74</sup> He also used Webster's dictionary, but found "spirituous" to mean having an active power or property and found that the active power was the power of intoxication: "It is not distillation that gives it the spirituous quality. Spirituous means active; it means lively; it means something that will produce active or lively results. It does not mean, necessarily, something that has been run through the worm of a still."<sup>75</sup> The judge was more concerned about the purpose of the law and reaching the obvious end of keeping intoxicants out of Indian country. "Then, manifestly, if the object intended by this statute was to prevent the destruction of Indians by drunkenness, as well as to prevent the commission of crimes which invariably follow as the consequences of drunkenness and debauchery in a country where the police regulations are limited, it should be construed so as to give effect to the object designed, and to that end all its provisions must be examined in the light of surrounding circumstances."<sup>76</sup>

Decisions holding that beer did not fit within the definition of intoxicating beverages opened the door to Indian country. The agent at Union Agency in Muskegee, Indian Territory, found that a recent case created numerous problems, "resulting in the opening of beer saloons in every village in the agency, almost without exception. The Indian and Federal laws were openly, flagrantly, and defiantly violated, drunkenness and its train of evils held full sway, the saloon flourished, trade was paralyzed, and for at a time it seemed that the only real protection which could come to the communities thus accursed rested in the law of self-protection."<sup>77</sup> The attorney general of the United States agreed with the courts that found that beer was not a spirituous liquor.<sup>78</sup> He refused to instruct his marshals to seize the beer. The commissioner of Indian affairs asked Congress to amend the law.

Other agents complained of other types of alcoholic beverages being brought into Indian

country. One agent raised the concern about hard cider.<sup>79</sup> John Foster at the Shoshone Agency in Wyoming expressed concern about whiskey being sold as lemon extract and Jamaica ginger.<sup>80</sup> These concerns were all addressed by Congress. The House Report on the bill proposed noted that different courts had held different interpretations of whether beer was prohibited: "The dealers in beer, taking advantage of this confusion over the proper construction of the law, reintroducing beer into the Indian territory, and under the guise of vending beer are violating the law against the introduction of ardent spirits. This bill is designed to remedy this mischief, which has grown to be harmful and detrimental to the Indians."<sup>81</sup>

The bill that passed Congress addressed these concerns. It prohibited "ardent spirits, ale, beer, wine or intoxicating liquors or liquors whatsoever kind"<sup>82</sup> It increased the punishment to imprisonment for not more than two years and fines of not more than \$300 for each offense. It turned out to be a necessary amendment. Two years later the US Supreme Court had a case before it on appeal which asked the same question: Was lager beer a spirituous liquor?<sup>83</sup> The defendant had been found guilty of introducing ten gallons of lager beer into the Choctaw Nation in Indian country, before the law was amended by Congress. The Supreme Court found that before the amendment, the definition of spirituous liquor did not include beer. It looked at various dictionaries for definition and followed the common and popular definition of the words. "So far, therefore, as the popular usage goes, according to the leading authorities, 'lager beer,' as a malt liquor made by fermentation, is not included in the term 'spirituous liquor,' the result of distillation."<sup>84</sup> The court noted that the law then in effect prohibited "spirituous liquor and wine," so that the argument that spirituous liquor meant all intoxicating beverages would not work. The court pointed to the fact that Congress believed it had to change the law to include beer, and added, "At any rate, the temptation to the courts to stretch



the law to cover an acknowledged evil is now removed."<sup>85</sup>

#### NATIONAL PROHIBITION AND CHANGE

Nationally, there was a movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to prohibit alcohol for all Americans. It culminated in the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919 prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States. The national experiment lasted until 1933, when the Twenty-first Amendment was passed specifically repealing the Eighteenth Amendment. It was repealed, in part, because of the inability to effectively enforce the law, the same problem that had plagued Indian prohibition. If people wanted alcohol, bootleggers were available to sell it to them at huge profits. Prohibition laws like this encouraged illegal activity that was difficult to stop, and prevented adults from engaging in an activity that did not necessarily have to be harmful. The government was placed in the position of guardian to all its citizens who were now treated as children who did not know better than to drink to excess.

When the Twenty-first Amendment repealed national prohibition, the question was raised whether it also repealed the Indian prohibition. Indians had all become citizens by an act of Congress in 1924.<sup>86</sup> But Congress wanted the Indian prohibition laws to continue. It did recognize that the definition of Indian country needed to be changed as the lands ceded by the Indians under treaty in the 1800s were now likely to be settled almost completely by whites, who no longer needed or wanted prohibition. It recognized that title to many of the allotted lands was now held by whites, and those lands should no longer be considered Indian country. Congress wanted to allow those whites with lands outside the reservations to buy liquor. The law that passed in 1933 applied the application of the special Indian liquor laws to "former Indian land now outside any existing Indian reservation in any case where title is no longer held by Indians

under trust patents or under any other form of deed or patent which contains restrictions against alienation without the consent of some official of the United States government."<sup>87</sup>

Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes supported the bill, which would allow white citizens on former Indian lands to use alcohol. But Ickes thought Indians on reservations should still be treated differently: "It is believed, however, that Indian reservations and all lands within the exterior borders of the present or subsequently established Indian reservations should be subject to the Indian liquor laws as provided in this bill; also that said laws should continue to be in force with reference to restricted Indians as provided in the bill."<sup>88</sup> So the New Deal was not extended to Indian prohibition laws. Prohibition was still the government's policy for Indians on reservations in the Great Plains and throughout the nation. Government officials continued to believe that they knew what was best for adult Indian citizens.

Change came slowly. After World War II, when many Indian veterans could not legally obtain alcohol at home, complaints were made to the government. The commissioner of Indian affairs noted in his report of 1946 that "Indians feel that the prohibition, which singles them out as a racial group, is discriminating and brands them as inferior. Veterans of World War II, who were able to obtain liquor with no difficulty while in the armed forces, have made many protests against the existence of the law. Various Indian tribes passed resolutions urging that sale of liquor be permitted to Indians off the reservations."<sup>89</sup>

In 1949 Congress discussed a bill that would have repealed the Indian liquor laws in Minnesota and Wisconsin while continuing a ban on liquor on reservations. This would have allowed Indians to drink alcohol anywhere but on the reservation. Wisconsin had worked on assimilating its Indians since it became a state. The purpose of this bill was to put the Indian in the same position as whites off the reservation. The Department of the Interior had no objections to the bill but would have preferred

that it apply to the entire country.<sup>90</sup> The House Committee decided Wisconsin and Minnesota had the greatest demand that prohibition be repealed and thus could serve as a test case to see how the law works, "so that there could be no possibility of making a general mistake along this line."<sup>91</sup>

Members of Congress gave reasons why this law should be passed for Minnesota and Wisconsin. It was difficult to tell who was an Indian, as many Indians had intermarried, and technically the law considered anyone an Indian with one-sixty-fourth percentage of Indian blood.<sup>92</sup> Someone whose great-grandparent's great-grandparent was an Indian was legally an Indian. The law discriminated against Indians, particularly Indian veterans.<sup>93</sup> It was pointed out that "japs, Negroes and Chinese" could buy alcohol but Indians could not.<sup>94</sup> Mr. O'Konski of Wisconsin summed it all up: "The Indians of today are educated. They would not become demoralized from removing this restriction; they respond to their teaching and surroundings and are worthy. We want them to feel not the stigma of restriction but the inspiration of decency, and manhood, and womanhood that becomes an American citizen."<sup>95</sup> Some Plains Indians also objected to the prohibition laws. Mr. D'Ewart of Montana placed in the record a resolution of the Crow Tribe asking for the repeal of all liquor laws. The tribe gave a list of reasons to do so—that it could not be enforced, that the early reasons for the law were no longer existing, that it was expensive to try and enforce, and that bootleg liquor was easily obtained, and created an environment for bootleggers. The tribe also noted that

At the moment and due to warnings by the Federal enforcement officers, all food stores and drug stores in the United States now refuse to sell to the Indians all articles of toiletry, such as cologne or perfumes containing any alcohol, also kitchen necessities such as vanilla and lemon extracts, as also being banned by the act of June 30, 1834, and as a consequence the Indians all

over the United States and Canada are resorting to the use and drinking of all kinds of shaving and rubbing lotions, canned heat, hair tonics, and such mixtures[,] which has now and is daily endangering the health of Indian youths, both men and women to the danger point.<sup>96</sup>

This last point, that Indians still needed protection from themselves, would be a reason some congressmen would not vote for this law. Mr. Bryson of South Carolina noted, "I am sure that all of us recognize the Indians as our wards in a sense. They are probably the truer Americans in the strictest senses than we ourselves are, because they are the aborigines, they were here when Columbus set foot on this land. I am sure, as we have protected them as far as we could in the past, we would not now intentionally place a stumbling block in their paths."<sup>97</sup> Mr. Rees of Kansas felt the same way. "I could give you 40 different ways by which you could help the Indian out and give them opportunities that are given the ordinary American citizens without including this sort of legislation."<sup>98</sup> He argued against the legislation as not good for Indians, for Wisconsin or Minnesota, or for the country. The bill was defeated.

But four years later Congress did finally resolve the issue. It came in a bill to repeal Indian prohibition in Arizona only, but was amended to include all Indian country within the United States. The House Report recognized the discriminatory nature of Indian prohibition. "The Indians for many years have complained that the liquor laws are most discriminatory in nature. The Indians feel that, irrespective of the merits or demerits of prohibition, it is unfair to legislate specifically against them in this matter. Inasmuch as Indians are expected to assume the responsibilities of citizenship and serve in the Armed Forces on an equal basis with other Americans, the committee sees no reason for continuing legislation that is applicable only to Indians."<sup>99</sup> The Department of the Interior, through the assistant secretary of the interior,

agreed that "the laws which prohibit the sale of intoxicants to Indians are discriminatory" and that "these laws should be made inapplicable to transactions occurring outside of Indian country generally."<sup>100</sup> Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona read into the record an editorial from a local Prescott newspaper: "An Indian is a voting, taxpaying American citizen who is spared none of the duties and responsibilities of this status. Along with his fellow American, he should have the right to take a drink or leave it alone."<sup>101</sup>

The bill passed. The prohibitions against the sale and use of liquor would not apply in any area that is not Indian country, nor to any acts within Indian country that followed state and tribal law. Indians could drink off the reservations, and they could drink on the reservations subject to tribal regulations. The tribes were to adopt ordinances related to Indian drinking similar to town, county, or state regulations in existence elsewhere. Most tribes adopted prohibition laws, including the Pine Ridge Sioux. But they were adopted by Indians for Indians, not imposed on them by the federal government.

#### CONCLUSION

Under the powers given it under the Constitution, Congress had the power to legislate over the Indians. It used this power in many ways, one of which was to prohibit intoxicating beverages from reaching the Indians. There were many reasons put forward in attempts to justify prohibiting liquor for Indians. Government paternalism, as guardian to ward, certainly accounted for most of it. Congress believed it knew what was best for its Indian "children." Many who advocated Indian prohibition, including Indian agents who worked with the tribes on a day-to-day basis, truly believed prohibition benefited the Indian. It would advance Native people along the road to civilization. It would free Indians of what the supporters of prohibition considered to be a white man's vice. These beliefs were held by people who thought they were putting the

Indians' interest first. They believed that Indian assimilation was the best way to help the Indians. Not surprisingly, Indians thought otherwise.

Preventing Indians from drinking was also seen as a way to protect the white settlers. Prohibition was a way to control the Indian and to put him in his place. Many whites already believed that Indians were inferior, and using the myth of the drunken Indian confirmed this belief and allowed policies to develop that marginalized the Indian. In *Addictions and Native Americans*, Laurence French notes that "Ironically, the policies of the dominant US society produced a self-fulfilling prophecy of psychocultural marginality and dependency among the Native Americans under their care."<sup>102</sup> The government made all decisions on behalf of Indians without consulting the Indians.

Indian prohibition was a policy that did not work. The government had tried it as a national experiment and it had not worked there either. It is difficult to legislate social behavior. Indians viewed it a policy to take away their culture and way of life, and resisted it. Whites viewed it as a policy of assimilation, which would better the Indians. Indian tribes still do maintain a distinct culture, as well as tribal sovereignty. Holmes and Antell's study of officials on the Wind River Reservation concludes that these different viewpoints still have an affect on the treatment of Indian alcohol treatment practices today:

[P]ortrayals of Indian degeneracy, evidenced particularly by alcohol abuse, symbolically enhance whites' ostensibly more self-disciplined lifestyle and explain the impoverished conditions on Indian reservations. Moreover, Indians perceived as weak willed and recalcitrant, and thus culpable for the deviant behavior allegedly fostering the difficult conditions, remain undeserving of ameliorative intervention beyond encouragement to undergo assimilative transformation. Whites achieve great benefit from a symbolic victory that simul-



taneously venerates the dominant culture and justifies the degraded conditions surrounding the subordinate one. Indians also emerge victorious, albeit materially impoverished, insofar as their resistance nourishes a distinctive ethnic identity and political self-consciousness.<sup>103</sup>

Additionally, the alcohol prohibition policy could be manipulated, as it is being manipulated in Whiteclay, Nebraska, today. There was and is always someone willing to go against community values and make a profit from selling liquor to Indians. And there are always people willing to take the risk and buy alcohol to drink. Enforcement has and continues to be a problem. Some people just do not see drinking and alcohol abuse as a serious problem. And others do not see it as a high enforcement priority on a limited enforcement budget. It was and is difficult to obtain evidence against a seller of liquor, as the buyer does not want to reveal his source. Because legislating social behavior does not always work, there needs to be a strong community culture against alcohol for prohibition to succeed.

Different perspectives of what caused the problem and how to solve it still exist. But these different perspectives all acknowledge that alcohol is a problem in Indian country, however defined, today. Indian alcohol problems need to be solved not by reference to past problems, stereotypes, and myths, but by dealing with the current knowledge of alcohol abuse within the structure of the tribal community. The history of Indian prohibition has shown what has not worked and why. The tribe must determine what will work for its members. Laws need to be adopted that fit the tribe's view and interpretation of alcohol policies. Laws that do not reflect the local community and culture will not be effective. Tribal members need to determine whether prohibition will work in their geographic area or will create more problems, or whether alcohol abuse can be ended by other means. It has been shown that laws can be interpreted to meet a desired goal of the interpreter whether

judge, court, or legislature. The policymakers should work to make clear their goals. The Indian interpretation of alcohol policy should be the one used, as it will best serve the needs of the tribal members.

#### NOTES

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31. *US Statutes at Large* 4 (1834): 729, 732; see also *US Statutes at Large* 12 (1862): 338, 339.
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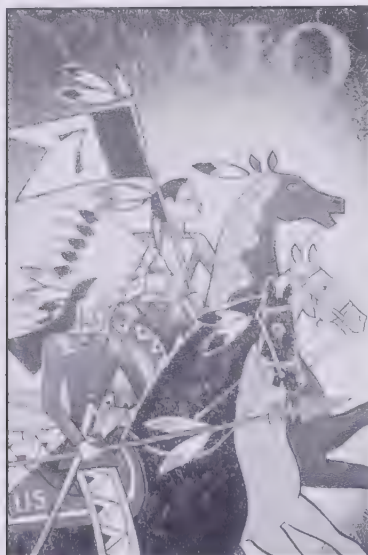
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Moving Stories: Migration and the American West, 1850-2000*. Edited by Scott E. Casper and Lucinda M. Long. Reno: Nevada Humanities Committee, distributed by the University of Nevada Press, 2001. xvii + 299 pp. Photographs, illustrations, contributors. \$14.95 paper.

This well-written, well-illustrated anthology will gladden the hearts of students of the American West, not least because nine of the eleven authors are young—doctoral candidates or assistant professors. There is hope for Western studies. Five are historians, six trained in and teach literature, but most cross disciplinary boundaries quite easily. The geographical scope of the essays stretches well beyond the Great Plains, but the reader will land squarely between the Missouri and Montana in much of the volume.

Theresa Strouth Gaul introduces the writings of three Pennsylvania sisters named Stewart who crossed the Overland Trail to Oregon in 1853 and their struggle (not always successful) to transcend the guidebook genre in describing their own migrant experiences. Linda Schelbitzki Pickle explains how gender shaped the recollections of Germans who journeyed to Iowa and Kansas between 1852 and 1905, particularly what male and female memoirists thought important to record and what not to. Gioia Woods discusses the life and writings of Sarah Winnemucca and how she worked to explain her Paiute world to a white audience.

Matthew Evertson, focusing on Stephen Crane's stories set in Nebraska and Mexico, shows how Crane devised a literary-realist vision of the West different from Theodore Roosevelt's or Owen Wister's. Douglas M. Edward provides a strongly documented description of boom-and-bust homesteading in Montana from 1908 to the early 1920s, re-

vealing how "both state-builders and homesteaders . . . were motivated and ultimately betrayed by ideologies, . . . the natural environment and global economic systems."

Michael K. Johnson analyzes *Born to Be*, the 1929 autobiography of the African American writer Taylor Gordon, who left a small Montana town with the Ringling circus and joined the Harlem Renaissance. Peter La Chapelle's essay deconstructs the nativist, eugenicist hostility to "Okie" migrants to 1930s California, thereby contributing significantly to the growing historiography on "whiteness studies." Josh Sides details the Black migration from Texas (especially Houston) to California in the 1940s, the "Second Emancipation." Heather Fryer ingeniously links three federal efforts to create—for obviously different reasons—a "prefab West" during World War II at Topaz, Utah (for relocated Japanese-Americans), Vanport, Oregon (for black and white shipyard workers), and Los Alamos, New Mexico (for the atomic scientists). Based largely on her work with oral histories at Brigham Young University, Jessie Embry tells of "Spanish-Speaking Mormons in Utah" both historically and recently. Marni Gauthier concludes by showing how Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997) re-works Henry Nash Smith's "myth of the garden"; in doing so she remarks trenchantly on how myth and history are related.

Editor Scott Casper, associate editor Lucinda M. Long, and the Nevada Humanities Committee have made a useful, original, invigorating, and rewarding contribution in this collection.

WALTER NUGENT  
Department of History  
University of Notre Dame

*Frontier Blood: The Saga of the Parker Family.* By Jo Ella Powell Exley. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xiii+331 pp. \$29.95.

These are the stories of four generations of one family that moved West with the frontier, and of one individual who emerged from the meeting of the frontier with the people who were already there. Elder John Parker, born in Maryland in 1758, had a son, Daniel, in Virginia in 1781. Daniel's son James W. was born in Georgia in 1797, and another, Silas, was born in Tennessee in 1804. James W.'s daughter, Rachel, was born in Illinois in 1819, as was Silas's daughter Cynthia Ann in 1826 and his son John in 1829. Cynthia Ann's son, Quanah, was born in Comanchería in 1849.

Several of these stories are well known, although not necessarily by the same people. Daniel Parker, founder of the Two-Seed Predestinarian Baptist movement, is familiar to historians of American religious groups. Rachel Plummer, Cynthia Ann, and Quanah are well known to historians of the American West. This book brings their stories together, albeit not altogether successfully.

The basic problem is documentary. While there is significant documentation for most of the Anglo-American Parkers, the documentation for Cynthia Ann's life with the Comanches, for her Comanche husband, and for Quanah before 1875 is practically nonexistent. Consequently, Exley must resort to such locutions as "According to legend" and to Quanah's own reminiscences, which are often difficult to reconcile with other documentary sources relating to Quanah and his parents. Moreover, Exley makes little effort to address these historical questions or to critique her sources. This is particularly unfortunate, since a previous writer on Cynthia Ann (Margaret Schmidt Hacker, in *Cynthia Ann Parker: The Life and the Legend*, 1990) has noted that the basic facts of her life have been "so exaggerated and romanticized that it is difficult—if not impossible—to determine the true

nature of her Comanche experiences." A little more effort in that direction would have been welcome.

THOMAS W. KAVANAGH  
Bloomington, Indiana

*Hidden Worlds: Revisiting the Mennonite Migrants of the 1870s.* By Royden Loewen. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001. Maps, photographs, index. viii + 138 pp. \$22.95.

What Russian Mennonite child has not heard the stories of the massive migration from Russia to the New World? The oft-repeated tales recount how large congregations collectively moved from Russia's steppes to North America's Plains. According to the stories, great-grandparents were in search of religious freedom and good land. They brought turkey-red wheat, recreated their farmland villages, and transformed the Plains into a breadbasket, just as they had transformed Catherine the Great's steppes from a Cossack wilderness into villages and productive farmland. Why revisit this story so ingrained in the collective memory of a people? Even outsider historians, such as John Bodnar in *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (1992), have noted the integrity of annual celebrations that refer to these past events.

Royden Loewen's investigation of the non-institutional history, that is to say the hidden histories of everyday women and men, uncovers new interpretations of the migration story. In many ways, Mennonite patriarchs and matriarchs did recreate Old World living patterns and cultural values on the Plains. Reproducing these communities, however, required adaptations that earlier historians may not have recognized, often because recently collected historical records were not available. Some historians have viewed Mennonites as unrivaled cultural transplanters, able to uproot their community abruptly and replant it elsewhere without disrupting family, community, and



religious continuity. Loewen argues that rather than directly transplanting their village systems and religious beliefs, Mennonites adapted Old World systems to the New World environment, picking and choosing both economic and cultural practices that would best reproduce their communities and values. Instead of challenging earlier work, Loewen's book adds a layer of sophisticated analysis to previous institutional history.

Loewen's careful exegesis of bilateral partible inheritance (where assets were divided in equal portions among all surviving children), women's letters that connected the far-flung Russian Mennonite communities in Canada and the United States, and diaries of pioneers and community planters reveals a self-conscious people who were fully aware of how their collective decisions could affect community stability. For example, Mennonites practiced bilateral partible inheritance for both economic and religious reasons. Loewen shows how economic motivations, often not ascribed to the deeply religious Mennonites, undergirded the community's cultural values from one generation to the next.

Historians of rural women will want to read *Hidden Worlds*. Loewen's continued sensitivity to women's hidden contributions strengthens his analysis throughout the volume and particularly in the chapter devoted to the "worlds of Mennonite immigrant women." Those concerned with ethnic and religious community history will find much to ponder in Loewen's pages.

Loewen continues to produce social and cultural history that by its very existence begs historians of Mennonites and other rural ethno-religious groups to include gender, social theory, and methodologies in their work—approaches that are still far too rare.

KIMBERLY D. SCHMIDT

The Department of History and  
the Washington Community Scholars' Center  
Eastern Mennonite University  
Harrisonburg, Virginia

*The Methodist Church on the Prairies, 1896-1914*. By George Emery. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. Photographs, tables, maps, notes, bibliography, index. xxi + 259 pp. \$55.00.

Mission efforts in Canada's midwest played a major part in the development of both the mainline Protestant churches and the young Canadian nation itself. It was on the prairies that Protestants cut their teeth on the interdenominational cooperation that would eventually create Canada's largest Protestant church, The United Church of Canada. And it was in the multifarious ethnic stew of the Canadian Plains that the churches attempted most zealously to forge "Christian Canadian citizens" out of both First Nations populations and immigrants of all stripes. Despite this significant history, there has been no recent monograph focusing on Methodism in this region. George Emery's book begins to fill that gap with its study of the boom settlement years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Emery analyzes prairie Methodism from several angles: polity, traditions, personnel, finances, and missions to immigrants, both urban and rural. Blending statistical research and archival anecdotes, he draws a portrait of a denomination determined to uphold its structures and disciplines in a difficult land. In their quest to maintain an enduring presence in the West, prairie Methodists confronted multiple challenges: geographical distance, indifference among a preoccupied settler flock, straitened finances, conflicting theologies of mission, and a cross-class membership. The chapters on immigrant missions bring the complexity of prairie Methodism into particularly sharp relief.

I see two gaps in this study. One is its silence around First Nations missions. While Emery rightly notes that these were not in the forefront of Methodist concerns in the era under consideration, Methodists did begin in this period to participate in managing Indian residential schools across the West. This legacy has come in recent years to haunt the main-

stream Canadian churches through lawsuits claiming sexual, physical, and cultural abuse of Native children. The second, less tangible, lacuna relates to the "spirit" of prairie Methodism. There is little in this work to help us catch the glow of this sometimes passionate faith and its practitioners. What moved them to weep at their own stinginess in making financial contributions, or to tear down denominational walls to form union congregations? Why did they bother to struggle with the competing claims of their diverse theologies? There is clearly more to be said about Methodist life on the Canadian prairies. This book forms an important base upon which to build that narrative.

SANDRA BEARDSALL

Department of Church History and Ecumenics  
St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon

*Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930.* By Greg Hall. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2002. x + 278 pp. Illustrations, photographs, epilogue, notes, index. \$34.95.

America's most vibrant symbol of militant unionism in the twentieth century remains the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the radical labor organization whose renown was literally larger than life. The union's strikes, work slow-downs, and suspected sabotage frightened employers, worried conservative labor groups, and eventually convinced the federal government to crush the loosely structured organization shortly after the United States entered the European war in 1917. Greg Hall centers his argument on the union's remarkable, if short-lived, resurgence following the end of the First World War. The Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (AWIU), the IWW's strongest affiliate, enjoyed an extraordinary revival in the early 1920s, especially among the migratory work-

ers who followed the grain harvests from Kansas north to the Dakotas and to eastern Washington's wheat-producing districts. The author correctly points out that labor historians have paid little attention to the union's postwar rebound among harvest hands in the West: "Contrary to what many historians have argued, particularly labor historians, the IWW was not in a state of wholesale decline during the 1920s."

*Harvest Wobblies* tells the remarkable story of migratory laborers, first in the Agricultural Workers Organization and later the AWIU, who traveled the rails from the Great Plains to California and the Pacific Northwest following the summer and fall vegetable, fruit, and wheat harvests. In seven uneven chapters Hall argues that agricultural workers comprised the greatest number of IWW members, especially in the Plains states where their appeal was greatest among younger itinerant laborers who felt the sting of exploitation at the hands of farmers, law enforcement authorities, and local business interests. It was among this class of mobile, sometimes homeless hoboos that a shared work-life culture developed based on common class experiences that "provided an identity and cohesion for its members."

Aside from some problematic copy-editing, this book's major weakness is the author's propensity to spin out endlessly the demise of the union after its brief revival in the early 1920s. Readers are repeatedly treated to "The Beginning of the End," "the Collapse of the AWIU," and an overly long final chapter, "The Road to Oblivion." The author would have been prudent to follow the advice given to the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*: "Begin at the beginning and go until you come to the end: then stop."

WILLIAM G. ROBBINS  
Department of History  
Oregon State University

*Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War and Its Legacy.* By James S. Hirsch. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. x + 358 pp. Photographs, sources, index. \$25.00.

In *Riot and Remembrance*, James S. Hirsch, an ace reporter formerly affiliated with the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, adds his dispassionate voice to the swelling volumes on one of America's most obscure, ignominious racial conflicts: the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. As Hirsch points out, even many native Tulsans knew nothing of the Riot until recent years, the silence surrounding the catastrophe having been deafening. Not only did the Riot escape local civic discourse, it garnered only scant mention—if any mention at all—in state-mandated textbooks.

Why now? Why Tulsa? The answers to both questions turn in large part on the formation of an eleven-member 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission, a body whose dialogue, debate, and deliberations Hirsch covered assiduously and documented meticulously. Initially convened in 1997, the Commission was charged by the Oklahoma legislature with finding facts, locating Riot survivors, and offering recommendations—including whether reparations for the Riot should be made. The Commission's work drew world-wide media attention.

An alleged "assault" involving two teenagers, seventeen-year-old elevator operator Sarah Page and nineteen-year-old shoeshine boy Dick Rowland, triggered an orgy of violence and mayhem. The supposed "assault" (a code word for rape in the overtly racist culture that defined this period) catalyzed rumors of a planned lynching. Sensational reporting by the *Tulsa Tribune*, lax law enforcement, and a racially hostile climate in general ensured the triumph of mob rule. All hell broke loose.

A marauding band of white vigilantes invaded Greenwood, the prominent African American entrepreneurial community, and looted, burned, and shot with reckless abandon. People, property, and promise vanished. Like a scorched earth war zone on the wrong

side of the tracks, Greenwood clung perilously to life. Property damage ran into the millions. The death toll arguably reached as high as three hundred. Scores lay injured. Tulsa stood defiled and defined.

A testament to the resilience of its residents, Greenwood rose from the ashes. Now largely of historical significance, the community continues to evolve.

Hirsch offers a lucid, accessible, objective account of this deeply disturbing American tragedy. *Riot and Remembrance* adds yet another perspective to a compelling story no longer waiting to be heard.

HANNIBAL B. JOHNSON  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

*The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action.* By Laurie Meijer Drees. Vancouver: University of Vancouver Press, 2002. xix + 246 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes index. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Native political organizations occupy a unique and important place in the Canadian political arena, whether on the national, provincial, or regional level. They offer a forum where both Native leaders and mainstream politicians can confer and, perhaps even more importantly, *be seen* to be conferring. This book is a study of one of the most influential of these organizations, the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), from its beginning in 1939 as an organization devoted to regional and community issues to the 1960s, when it led the fight against the Trudeau government's "White Paper."

One of the volume's strengths is the special effort Meijer Drees has made to locate the development of the IAA in the political milieu of the 1930s and 1940s. She masterfully demonstrates how different provincial political parties, government acts, the development of farmers' unions, and other social political and economic factors contributed to the IAA's



founding and growth. She also illustrates how current thought in the 1940s regarding social welfare programs was translated into Indian policy. Along the way she challenges many commonly-held preconceptions about early influences on the organization, such as the supposed impact of Native World War II veterans.

Perhaps one of the most enlightening aspects of her study involves the role non-Natives played in the IAA's development. Drees pays particular attention to John Laurie, IAA secretary from 1944 to 1956. Through the IAA, Laurie was able to promote his personal view of what would benefit Indian peoples. His paternalistic and integrationist ideas played counterpoint to the ideas and interests of the organization's Native leaders. Along with discussing the effects of white liberal organizations such as the Friends of the Indian Society and the Indian Rights Association, Drees offers important and perceptive analyses of the motivations and political thought of Native leaders like John Calihoo, John Tootoosis, Harold Cardinal, and others.

Drees's work shines as an historical study shedding light on evolving and current conditions. Her analysis makes it clear, for example, that the government's massive funding of Native organizations that began in the 1960s and continues to this day, which most observers suggest grew out of issues strictly unique to the 1960s, was actually a logical extension of earlier policies from the 1940s and 1950s. *The Indian Association of Alberta* is an important and useful contribution to the study of the history and development of Native political organizations in Canada.

JOE SAWCHUK  
Department of Native Studies  
Brandon University, Manitoba

*Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy.* By James T. Patterson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Photographs, map, illustration, appendices, notes, bibliographic essay, acknowledgments, index. xxx + 285 pp. \$27.50.

Rendered during the postwar consensus period, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision struck at the core of *de jure* segregation. Recognizing the American educational system as a "great equalizer," Thurgood Marshall and other advocates insisted that the "separate but equal" doctrine codified by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case needed to be overturned to ensure opportunities for African Americans. Marshall found an ally in Chief Justice Earl Warren and his supporters on the Supreme Court who based their decision in the *Brown* case on the social science research of Kenneth and Mamie Clark and Gunnar Myrdal. Their findings suggested that African American children perceived themselves as inferior as a result of attending segregated schools. Integrated schools would provide African American students with the skills and resources necessary to succeed in a pluralist society.

*Brown* elicited a variety of responses as American school districts struggled to implement desegregation plans. Patterson uses an examination of desegregation attempts prior to *Brown* and a discussion of the impact desegregation had in Charlotte, Denver, and Boston (among other cities) as bookends for his description of the legal wrangling surrounding the 1954 case. The ideas and theories used in the *Brown* ruling spawned a multiplicity of opinions that would influence desegregation policies throughout subsequent decades and contribute to a revisionist critique of *Brown* by the 1990s.

Rather than concentrating solely on the 1954 case, Patterson highlights several early desegregation attempts at the Universities of Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas before discussing events in Topeka. These references to Great Plains communities allow the reader to

perceive segregation as not limited to southern states. Patterson uses the reflections of individuals such as the members of the Carter family of Mississippi to illustrate the abuse African American students faced in integrated settings and their determination to succeed at the secondary and university levels. These personal accounts demonstrate that African Americans held differing interpretations of desegregation. At one end of the continuum, proponents believed that other social, political, and economic restrictions would be lifted as a result of the ruling. Others, like the novelist Zora Neale Hurston, criticized Warren's conclusion that "separate but equal" educational facilities deprived children of equal opportunities and exacerbated inferiority. Hurston bristled at the assumption that held that African American students were inferior because they attended black-run community schools.

The exhaustive nature of this study helps illuminate the conflicting nature of race relations in the late twentieth century.

KRISTIN LEIGH AHLBERG

Department of History  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town.* By Mary Pipher. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2002. Foreword, appendices, bibliography, afterword, index. xxvi + 390 pp. \$25.00.

"Identity," writes Pipher, "is no longer based on territory. The world community is small and interconnected. We can learn from this to be kinder and more appreciative of life. And we can learn the importance of understanding the perspectives of all our neighbors in our global village." Philosophically poignant, *The Middle of Everywhere* presents rich, descriptive narratives of hope, courage, tragedy and resilience through the life-stories of refugees and immigrants, from Bosnia to the

Sudan, struggling to create "home" in Lincoln, Nebraska. Significantly, although refugee experiences in one particular Midwestern city are highlighted, one can imagine that any community of similar size across the entire Great Plains region could be substituted for "Lincoln, Nebraska" as underlying challenges facing new immigrants (language barriers, skill development, education, employment, and adjusting to local customs while simultaneously maintaining cultural traditions, to name a few) remain consistent despite geographical placement.

Throughout the book, the reader is introduced to refugees from a multitude of countries, of varying ages, with unique life stories of challenge and triumph, with whom Pipher has worked. Some of these include a Kurdish family embracing a mother and six sisters; an elementary classroom comprised of refugee children from five different countries; adolescent students from countries as disparate from one another as Vietnam and the Ukraine; young adults from Kosovo, Vietnam, and Iraq; a group of six women of Vietnamese, Mexican, and El Salvadoran heritage attending a conversational Even Start program; and refugees from the Kakuma Refugee camp in Kenya.

The lessons of this book are at once global and personal. On a global level, Pipher shares her knowledge and experience building and maintaining relationships as a cultural broker with individuals from unique countries, backgrounds, family patterns, and living arrangements, while simultaneously interjecting subtle messages for greater understanding of all new refugees and immigrants, regardless of country of origin, background, family pattern, or living arrangement. On a personal level, it is impossible to read *The Middle of Everywhere* without considering one's own immigrant history—the challenges and opportunities presented by America, the idealized country with streets paved in gold, that so fascinated (and effectively lured) blood kin from generations past.

In addition to gaining greater understanding of our global village's occupants and their

daily struggles for survival as new American residents, the reader secures much practical information, including suggestions about working with people for whom English is a new language and advice on how to become a "cultural broker."

ROCHELLE L. DALLA

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*Learning to Be an Anthropologist and Remaining "Native": Selected Writings.* By Beatrice Medicine, edited with Sue-Ellen Jacobs. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Photographs, tables, appendix, index. xxvi + 371 pp. \$55.00 cloth, \$27.50 paper.

This engaging compendium of essays chronicles the professional contributions of Dr. Beatrice Medicine, a Lakota raised on the Standing Rock Reservation. She earned a B.S. degree from South Dakota State University in 1945 and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1983 after many years as a professional anthropologist. She has served as an academic anthropologist at no less than ten universities since retiring in 1988 and also worked as an applied anthropologist during this time. As a Native American who remains an active participant in her Native culture, she brings to her work a cultural perspective infrequently found in anthropological writings.

The volume gathers together thirty articles written between 1969 and 1998, most of them from the 1970s and 1980s, opening with a biographical essay first published in 1978. Other essays are grouped into related subjects: education, gender and cultural identity, beliefs and well-being, families, and anthropology. Throughout the book Medicine is concerned with the cultural roles of Indians and of Indian women.

Medicine deals with particular ethnographic problems with subtlety and pene-

tration. In "'Warrior Women': Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women" she examines several traditional roles that go beyond the stereotype for women in Lakota and Plains Indian societies. In a chapter on Lakota alcoholism she notes the powerful coercions toward excessive drinking and the relatively mild pressures toward abstinence. She points out that the Sun Dance is becoming a means for controlling the use of alcohol, but the annual ceremony is too short and its participants too widely dispersed to provide a cultural support system for sobriety. While these essays do not directly address traditional beliefs and practices such as yuwipi, vision quest, or Sun Dance, they are omnipresent. Yuwipi appears nine times in the index, the vision quest nine times, and the Sun Dance twenty-one.

Other essays deal with Indian problems as a whole rather than with the particular situation of the Lakota and, I think, are less successful. A chapter discussing cultural change and adaptive strategies, written in 1981, seems more an overview for social workers than a searching analysis.

These essays are clearly needed, and while a better selection, perhaps, could have been made for this book, the volume stands as a testament to the achievements of an anthropologist who has worked in two worlds.

THOMAS P. MYERS

University of Nebraska State Museum  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



## BOOK NOTES

*Niddrie of the North-West: Memoirs of a Pioneer Canadian Missionary.* By John W. Niddrie, edited by John W. Chalmers and John J. Chalmers. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000. Photographs, postscript, notes. xxii + 220 pp. \$24.95 paper.

John J. Chalmers furthers the work of his father, John W. Chalmers, in bringing John W. Niddrie's memoirs to life. The editors present the story of a Methodist missionary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in remote parts of Alberta and Manitoba.

*A Prairie Mosaic: An Atlas of Central Nebraska's Land, Culture and Nature.* Edited by Steven J. Rothenberger and Susanne George-Bloomfield. Kearney: University of Nebraska at Kearney, 2000. Maps, photographs, figures, illustrations, list of contributors. 224 pp. \$20.00 paper.

Divided into four sections—Geography, Climate Biology; History, Law; Art, Culture; and Economics, Politics, Society—the volume explores the depth and range of Nebraska's history. Oversize color pages, photographs, and illustrations depict the flora and fauna, people, art, geography, and history of central Nebraska.

*The Oregon Trail: A Photographic Journey.* By Bill and Jan Moeller. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2001. Color photographs, maps, sites of interest, bibliography, index. \$18.00 paper.

The Moellers' travel portfolio of the Oregon Trail attempts to capture the length and change of seasons early settlers witnessed crossing the country between 1841 to 1860. Photographs are accompanied by entries taken from journals and diaries of pioneers and emigrants.

*Canyons of the Texas High Plains.* By Wyman Meinzer. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001. Photographs, map, bibliography. vii + 88 pp. \$29.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Texas's official state photographer offers photographs of the Texas canyons that showcase the land and topography.

*Dictionary of Midwestern Literature. Volume One: The Authors.* Edited by Philip A. Greasley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Photographs, appendix, contributors, index. xii + 668 pp. \$59.95.

This initial volume of a projected three-volume set includes entries on more than four hundred authors, surveying their lives, and relevant criticism.

*The University of Manitoba: An Illustrated History.* By J.M. Bumstead. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001. Photographs, figures, illustrations, epilogue, appendix, selected readings. xii + 228 pp. \$34.95 paper.

Through archival research, rare photos, and student memoirs, Bumstead chronicles the history of the University of Manitoba from 1877 to 1977, its first hundred years.

*Willa Cather: The Contemporary Reviews.* Edited by Margaret Anne O'Connor. Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Illustrations, index. xxvi + 550 pp. \$130.00.

Limited to those works Cather prepared for publication herself, this twelfth volume in the American Critical Archives series is organized chronologically according to publication dates of Cather's works.

# NOTES AND NEWS

## CALL FOR PAPERS

"Native American Encounters with Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains." The *Great Plains Quarterly* will be publishing a special thematic issue on Native American perspectives of the Lewis & Clark expedition into the Great Plains. Submissions appropriate for this issue include descriptions and analyses of encounters between Lewis & Clark and the tribal people on the Plains, how these encounters effected Native people (both in the past and today), Native perspectives on the Lewis & Clark commemoration activities, and other topics that address the convergence of Native people and the expedition. Please send submissions by 15 October 2003. For more information, contact Charles A. Braithwaite, Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, P.O. Box 880245, Lincoln, NE 68588-0245; (402) 472-6178; email: <cbraithwaite2@unl.edu>. Our submission guidelines can also be found at <<http://www.unl.edu/plains/gpq.htm>>

## TEXTBOOK SEEKING GREAT PLAINS SCHOLARS

Greenwood Press is publishing an eight-volume American regional culture series, and will include a text on the Great Plains. The editor is seeking authors who can provide essays on Great Plains culture in the following areas: art, literature, ethnicity, fashion, film, folklore, food, music, and sports/recreation. Deadline for submissions is 1 August 2003. Illustrations are encouraged. For more information, contact Amanda Rees, Editor, Department of Geography and Recreation, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY, 82071; (307) 766-3320; email: <reesa@uwyo.edu>.

## INTERNATIONAL WILLA CATHER SEMINAR

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation will present the 9th Annual International Cather Seminar, 28 May - 2 June 2003 at Middlebury College in Ripton, Vermont. The seminar will address questions of "Cather as Cultural Icon." For more information, contact: Susan Rosowski, Seminar Director, Cather Project, Dept. of English, 1213 Seaton Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0693. You can call 402-472-1919; e-mail: <catherproject2@unl.edu> or visit <[www.unl.edu/Cather](http://www.unl.edu/Cather)>.

## MARI SANDOZ CENTER

The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center has been established at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. The Center will serve as a repository of Plains archival materials, a site for seminars and workshops, and serve as the headquarters for the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, which will provide a collection of Sandoz materials for the exhibits and archives. Both facilities will support Chadron State College academic programs including the new bachelor's degree in applied history/museum studies, distance-learning courses, and educational activities for the region's primary and secondary school students and teachers. For further information, please contact: Jeanne Bishop, Chadron State College director of special projects and campaign director for The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Project, at <[hjbishop@alltel.net](mailto:hjbishop@alltel.net)> or 402/421-7736. The web site for the Center is: <<http://www.csc.edu/alumni/sandoz.asp>>.

The *Great Plains Quarterly* seeks a readership among scholars as well as interested laypersons. Domestic subscription rates are \$15.00 for students for one year, \$25.00 for individuals for one year and \$48.00 for two years, \$50.00 for institutions for one year and \$90.00 for two years. Single issues may be obtained for \$8.00, plus a modest postage and handling fee. Nebraska residents, please add applicable state and city sales tax. Canadian subscription rates for one year are \$34.00 for individuals and \$60.00 for institutions. Other foreign subscriptions for one year are \$38.00 for individuals and \$75.00 for institutions.

The *Quarterly* welcomes the submission of manuscripts and essays that are both solidly researched and interestingly written. In all cases contributions must be free of specialized jargon so that they can be read, understood, and appreciated by persons in other academic fields and by interested laypersons. Total length of manuscripts, including notes and illustrations, should not exceed thirty pages, but shorter contributions will be preferred. All copy, including notes and captions, should be double spaced. References in the notes should conform to the mode specified in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). See especially chapter 15. Manuscripts should be accompanied by two duplicate copies, a 1.44 MB disk or a 100 MB computer disk, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The disk should be formatted for IBM PC and the article in WordPerfect, MSWord, or text file format. Blind review procedures are followed for all contributions to the *Quarterly*. The decision to publish an article rests with the editor in consultation with associate editors.

All correspondence on editorial matters as well as subscriptions should be addressed to: Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1155 Q Street, Hewitt Place, P.O. Box 880245, Lincoln, NE 68588-0245; email: [gpq@unl.edu](mailto:gpq@unl.edu); webpage: [www.unl.edu/plains/publications/gpq.html](http://www.unl.edu/plains/publications/gpq.html)

#### FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in *Great Plains Quarterly* during a volume year. All articles submitted to the *Quarterly* are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from the editorial board of the *Quarterly*. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies' annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

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in the words of her sister, Edith Abbott (1876-1957), herself a significant figure in the history of social work education. We included Sorensen's work because it illuminates an important figure from the Great Plains who has received far too little attention given the enormous difference she has made to American life. Also, the excerpt printed here was written in such a way as to bring to life the day-to-day experiences of young people on the Plains at the end of the nineteenth century. We want to issue a special thanks to the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer and the Nebraska Historical Society for helping us obtain the photographs that accompany Sorensen's essay.

This issue also includes Karen De Bres' essay, "Come to the 'Champagne Air': Changing Promotional Images of the Kansas Climate, 1854-1900." The manuscript was originally

presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies 2002 annual symposium, "Great Plains Migrations." Her work sheds light on an important part of the migration experience in early Kansas settlement.

We hope these new features of *Great Plains Quarterly* meet with the approval of the readership. Given the mission of the Center for Great Plain Studies, which is to promote a greater understanding of the people, culture, history, and environment of the Great Plains through a variety of means, we feel including scholarship in different forms fits well within the boundaries of what *Quarterly* should publish.

CHARLES A. BRAITHWAITE  
Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*

# EXCERPTS FROM THE LEWIS AND CLARK JOURNALS: AN EPIC OF DISCOVERY, THE ABRIDGMENT OF THE DEFINITIVE NEBRASKA EDITION THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE PLAINS

GARY E. MOULTON

Excerpted from *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An Epic of Discovery, The Abridgment of the Definitive Nebraska Edition*, edited and with an introduction by Gary E. Moulton. © 2003 by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. Available wherever books are sold or from the University of Nebraska Press 800.526.2617 and on the web at <[www.nebraskapress.unl.edu](http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu)>.

*Please note:* The following excerpts are from the journal entries of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, as well as enlisted men who kept journals on the expedition: John Ordway, Charles Floyd, Patrick Gass, and Joseph Whitehouse. The author of each entry is noted in brackets. Footnotes have been placed at the end of their appropriate entry for the convenience of the reader. Three asterisks (\*\*\*) denote omission of text within a chapter or at the end of a chapter.

Gary E. Moulton is Thomas C. Sorensen Professor of American History at the University of Nebraska. He is the recipient of the J. Franklin Jameson Award of the American Historical Association for the editing of the Lewis and Clark journals, and he won the Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award from the University of Nebraska.

[GPQ 23 (Spring 2003): 69-91]

## Chapter 1 Expedition Underway May 14-August 24, 1804

May 14, 1804

[CLARK] I Set out at 4 oClock P. M. in the presence of many of the Neighbouring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missourie to the upper Point of the 1st Island 4 Miles and Camped on the Island which is Situated Close on the right (or Starboard) Side, and opposit the mouth of a Small Creek called Cold water,<sup>1</sup> a heavy rain this after-noon. [Camped in St. Charles County, Missouri, near and across from Fort Bellefontaine, St. Louis County.]

<sup>1</sup> Coldwater Creek, St. Louis County, Missouri.

May 15, 1804

[CLARK] Rained the greater part of the last night, and this morning untile 7 oClock— at 9 oClock Set out and proceeded on 9 miles passed two Islands & incamped on the Starbd. Side at a Mr. Pipers Landing opposit an Island,<sup>2</sup> the Boat<sup>3</sup> run on Logs three times to day, owing her being too heavily loaded a



Sturn. [Camped below St. Charles, St. Charles County, Missouri.]

<sup>2</sup> James Piper may have owned the landing across from the now lost Charbonnier Island along with his other holdings in the St. Charles district.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning the keelboat.

May 16, 1804

[CLARK] we arrived at St. Charles at 12 oClock a number Spectators french & Indians flocked to the bank to See the party . . . I was invited to Dine with a Mr. Ducett this gentleman was once a merchant from Canadia, from misfortunes aded to the loss of a Cargo Sold to the late Judge Turner he has become Somewhat reduced.<sup>4</sup> [Camped at St. Charles.]

<sup>4</sup> François Duquette must have mentioned his loss to George Turner at dinner.

May 17, 1804

[CLARK] a fine Day 3 men<sup>5</sup> Confined for misconduct, I had a Court martial & punishment Several Indians, who informed me that the Saukees<sup>6</sup> had lately Crossed to war against the Osage Nation. [Remained at St. Charles.]

[CLARK] George Drewyer arrive.

<sup>5</sup> Collins, Hall, and Werner.

<sup>6</sup> Sauk, or Sac, Indians.

May 18, 1804

[CLARK] I had the loading in the Boat & perogue<sup>7</sup> examined and changed So as the Bow of each may be heavier laded than the Stern . . . I Sent George Drewyer with a Letter to Capt Lewis Two Keel Boats arrive from Kentucky to day loaded with whiskey Hats &c. [Remained at St. Charles.]

[WHITEHOUSE] passed the evening verry agreeable dancing with the french ladies.

<sup>7</sup> Pirogues were usually large dugout canoes or open boats; the captains used the terms "pirogue" and "canoe" interchangeably.

May 19, 1804

[CLARK] I heard of my Brothers illness to day which has given me much Concur.<sup>8</sup> [Remained at St. Charles.]

[CLARK] A Violent Wind last night from the W. S. W. accompanied with rain which lasted about three hours Cleared away this morn'g at 8 oClock, I took receipt for the pay of the men up to the 1St. of Decr. next . . . I recve an invitation to a Ball, it is not in my power to go. George Drewyer return from St Louis and brought 99 Dollars, he lost a letter from Cap Lewis to me, Seven Ladies visit me to day.

<sup>8</sup> It is not known which of Clark's brothers was ill.

May 20, 1804

[LEWIS] The morning was fair, and the weather pleasant; at 10 oCk A M. agreeably to an appointment of the preceeding day, I was joined by Capt. Stoddard, Lieuts. Milford & Worrell together with Messrs. A. Chouteau, C. Gratiot,<sup>9</sup> and many other respectable inhabitants of St. Louis, who had engaged to accompany me to the Vilage of St. Charles; accordingly at 12 Oclk after bidding an affectionate adieu to my Hostis, that excellent woman the spouse of Mr. Peter Chouteau, and some of my fair friends of St. Louis, we set forward to that village in order to join my friend companion and fellow labourer Capt. William Clark who had previously arrived at that place with the party destined for the discovery of the interior of the continent of North America. [Lewis arrived at St. Charles in the evening.]

[CLARK] I gave the party leave to go and hear a Sermon to day. [Remained at St. Charles.]

<sup>9</sup> Amos Stoddard, Clarence Mulford, Stephen Worrell, René Auguste Chouteau, and Charles Gratiot.

May 21, 1804

[CLARK] All the forepart of the Day Arranging our party and prcureing the different articles

necessary for them at this place— Dined with Mr. Ducett and Set out at half passed three o'clock under three Cheers from the gentlemen on the bank and proceeded on. [Camped above St. Charles, on an island that apparently has since disappeared.]

May 22, 1804

[CLARK] Delay one hour for 4 french men who got liberty to return to arrange Some business they had forgotten in Town, at 6 o'clock we proceeded on, passed Several Small farms on the bank, and a large creek on the Lbd. Side Called *Bonom*<sup>10</sup> a Camp of Kickapoos on the St. Side Those Indians told me Several days ago that they would Come on & hunt and by the time I got to their Camp they would have Some Provisions for us . . . Soon after we came too the Indians arrived with 4 Deer as a Present, for which we gave them two qts. of whiskey. [Camped near the mouth of Femme Osage River, St. Charles County, Missouri.]

<sup>10</sup> Bonhomme Creek, St. Louis County, Missouri.

May 23, 1804

[CLARK] ran on a Log and detained one hour, proceeded the Course of Last night 2 Miles to the mouth of a Creek on the Stbd. Side Called Osage Womans R,<sup>11</sup> about 30 yds. wide . . . (on this Creek 30 or 40 famlys are Settled,[]) Crossed to the Settlemt. and took in R & Jo: Fields who had been Sent to purchase Corn & Butter &c. many people Came to See us, we passed a large Cave on the Lbd. Side about 120 feet wide 40 feet Deep & 20 feet high many different immages are Painted on the Rock at this place. the Inds & French pay omage. many nams are wrote on the rock, Stopped about one mile above for Capt Lewis who had assended the Clifts which is at the Said Cave 300 fee[t] high, hanging over the Water . . . Capt. Lewis near falling from the Pencelia of rocks 300 feet, he caught at 20 foot.<sup>12</sup> [Camped in either St. Charles or Franklin County, Missouri, above Tavern Creek.]

[WHITEHOUSE] passed some Plantations, which is called Boons settlement lying on the North side of the River. This settlement was made by Colonel Daniel Boone, the person who first discoverer'd Kentucky, & who was residing at this place, with a number of his family and friends.

<sup>11</sup> Femme Osage Creek, St. Charles County, Missouri.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis had his accident near Tavern Cave, Franklin County, Missouri.

May 24, 1804

[CLARK] passed a Verry bad part of the River Called the Deavels race ground, this is where the Current Sets against Some projecting rocks for half a mile on the Labd. Side . . . we attempted to pass up under the Lbd. Bank which was falling in So fast that the evident danger obliged us to Cross between the Starbd. Side and a Sand bar in the middle of the river, we hove up near the head of the Sand bar, the Sand moveing & banking caused us to run on the Sand. The Swiftness of the Current wheeled the boat, Broke our Toe rope, and was nearly over Setting the boat, all hand Jumped out on the upper Side and bore on that Side untill the Sand washed from under the boat and wheeled on the next bank by the time She wheeled a 3rd Time got a rope fast to her Stern and by the means of Swimmers was Carred to Shore and when her Stern was down whilst in the act of Swinging a third time into Deep water near the Shore, we returned, to the Island where we Set out and assended under the Bank which I have just mentioned . . . all in Spirits. [Camped below Washington, Franklin County, Missouri.]

May 25, 1804

[CLARK] Camped at the mouth of a Creek called <River a Chauritte>,<sup>13</sup> above a Small french Village of 7 houses and as many families, Settled at this place to be convt. to hunt, & trade with the Indians, here we met with Mr. Louisell<sup>14</sup> imedeately down from the <Seeder> [Cedar] Isld. Situated in the

Countrey of the *Suxex*<sup>15</sup> 400 Leagues up he gave us a good Deel of information Some letters he informed us that he Saw no Indians on the river below the *Poncrars*<sup>16</sup> . . . The people at this Village is pore, houses Small, they Sent us milk & eggs to eat. [Camped at La Charette, Warren County, Missouri.]

<sup>13</sup> Charette Creek

<sup>14</sup> Régis Loisel was living at La Charette on Charette Creek.

<sup>15</sup> Sioux Indians.

<sup>16</sup> Ponca Indians.

May 26, 1804

[LEWIS AND CLARK, DETACHMENT ORDERS]

The Commanding Officers direct, that the three Squads under the command of Sergets. Floyd Ordway and Pryor heretofore forming two messes each, shall untill further orders constitute three messes only, the same being altered and organized as follows (viz)—

1 *Sergt. Charles Floyd.*

*Privates:*

2 Hugh McNeal

3 Patric Gass

4 Reubin Fields (2)

5 John B Thompson

+ 6 John Newman

7 Richard Winsor

+ Francis Rivet &

8 Joseph Fields (3)

9 *Sergt. John Ordway.*

*Privates.*

10 William Bratton (4)

11 John Colter (5)

x 12 Moses B. Reed

13 Alexander Willard

14 William Warner

15 Silas Goodrich

16 John Potts &

17 Hugh Hall

18 *Sergt. Nathaniel Pryor. (6)*

*Privates.*

19 George Gibson (7)

20 George Shannon (8)

21 John Shields (9)

22 John Collins

23 Joseph Whitehouse

24 Peter Wiser

F 25 Peter Crusat &

F 26 Francis Labuche

The commanding officers further direct that the remainder of the detachmen shall form two messes; and that the same be constituted as follows. (viz)—

*Patroon, Baptist Dechamps*

*Engages*

Etienne Mabbauf

Paul Primaut

Charles Hébert

Baptist La Jeunesse

Peter Pinaut

Peter Roi &

Joseph Collin

1 *Corpl. Richard Warvington.*

*Privates.*

2 Robert Frasier

3 John Boleye

4 John Dame

5 Ebinezer Tuttle &

6 Isaac White

The Commanding officers further direct that the messes of Sergets. Floyd, Ordway and Pryor shall untill further orders form the crew of the Batteaux;<sup>17</sup> the Mess of the Patroon La Jeunesse will form the permanent crew of the red Perogue; Corpl. Warvington's mess forming that of the white perogue . . .

The posts and duties of the Sergets. shall be as follows (viz)— when the Batteaux is under way, one Sergt. shall be stationed at the helm, one in the center on the rear of the Starboard locker, and one at the bow. *The Sergt. at the helm*, shall steer the boat, and see



that the baggage on the quarterdeck is properly arranged and stowed away in the most advantageous manner; to see that no cooking utensels or loos lumber of any kind is left on the deck to obstruct the passage between the burths— he will also attend to the compas when necessary.

The Sergt at the center will command the guard, manage the sails, see that the men at the oars do their duty; that they come on board at a proper season in the morning, and that the boat gets under way in due time; he will keep a good lookout for the mouths of all rivers, creeks, Islands and other remarkable places and shall immediately report the same to the commanding officers; he will attend to the issues of sperituos liquors; he shall regulate the halting of the batteaux through the day to give the men refreshment, and will also regulate the time of her departure taking care that not more time than is necessary shall be expended at each halt— it shall be his duty also to post a centinel on the bank, near the boat whenever we come too and halt in the course of the day, at the same time he will (acompanied by two his guard) reconnoiter the forrest around the place of landing to the distance of at least one hundred paces. when we come too for the purpose of encamping at night, the Sergt. of the guard shall post two centinels immediately on our landing; one of whom shal be posted near the boat, and the other at a convenient distance in rear of the encampment; at night the Sergt. must be always present with his guard, and he is positively forbidden to suffer any man of his guard to absent himself on any pretext whatever; he will at each relief through the night, accompanied by the two men last off their posts, reconnoiter in every direction around the camp to the distance of at least one hundred and fifty paces, and also examine the situation of the boat and perogues, and see that they ly safe and free from the bank.

It shall be the duty of the *sergt. at the bow*, to keep a good look out for all danger which may approach, either of the enemy, or obstructions which may present themselves to pas-

sage of the boat; of the first he will notify the Sergt. at the center, who will communicate the information to the commanding officers, and of the second or obstructions to the boat he will notify the Sergt. at the helm; he will also report to the commanding officers through the Sergt. at the center all perogues boats canoes or other craft which he may discover in the river, and all hunting camps or parties of Indians in view of which we may pass. he will at all times be provided with a seting pole and assist the bowsman in poling and managing the bow of the boat. it will be his duty also to give and answer all signals, which may hereafter be established for the government of the perogues and parties on shore.

The Sergts. will on each morning before our departure relieve each other in the following manner—(viz) The Sergt. at the helm will parade the new guard, relieve the Sergt. and the old guard, and occupy the middle station in the boat; the Sergt. of the old guard will occupy the station at the bow, and the Sergt. who had been stationed the preceeding day at the bow will place himself at the helm. The sergts. in addition to those duties are directed each to keep a separte journal from day today of all passing occurences, and such other observations on the country &c. as shall appear to them worthy of notice—

The Sergts. are relieved and exempt from all labour of making fires, pitching tents or cooking, and will direct and make the men of their several messes perform an equal proportion of those duties.

The guard shall hereafter consist of one sergeant and six privates & engages.

*Patroon, Dechamp, Copl. Warvington, and George Drewyer*, are exempt from guad duty; the two former will attend particularly to their perogues at all times, and see that their lading is in good order, and that the same is kept perfectly free from rain or other moisture; the latter will perform certain duties on shore which will be assigned him from time to time: all other soldiers and engaged men of whatever discription must perform their regular tour of guad duty . . .

Sergt. John Ordway will continue to issue the provisions and make the detales for guard or other duty. The day after tomorrow lyed corn and grece will be issued to the party, the next day Poark and flour, and the day following indian meal and poark; and in conformity to that ratiene provisions will continue to be issued to the party untill further orders. should any of the messes prefer indian meal to flour they may recieve it accordingly— no poark is to be issued when we have fresh meat on hand.

Labuche and Crusat will man the larboard bow oar alternately, and the one not engaged at the oar will attend as the Bows-man, and when the attention of both these persons is necessary at the bow, their oar is to be maned by any idle hand on board.[Camped on an island opposite Hermann, Gasconade County, Missouri.]

<sup>17</sup> Occasional term for the party's keelboat.

\* \* \*

June 28, 1804

[CLARK] To Describe the most probable of the various accounts of this great river of the Kansas, would be too lengthy & uncertain to insert here, it heads with the river Del Norid<sup>44</sup> in the black Mountain<sup>45</sup> or ridge which Divides the waters of the Kansas *Del Nord*, & Callarado<sup>46</sup> & oppsoitly from those of the Missoureis (and not well assertaind) This River recves its name from a nation which dwells at this time on its banks & 2 villages one about 20 Leagues & the other 40 Leagues up, those Indians are not very noumerous at this time, reduced by war with their neighbours, &c. they formerly liveid on the South banks of the Missouries 24 Leagues above this river in a open & butifull plain and were very noumerous at the time the french first Settled the Illinois, I am told they are a fierce & war-like people, being badly Supplied with fire arms, become easily conquered by the Aiauway & Saukees who are better furnished with those materials of war, This nation is now out in the plains hunting the Buffalow . . . a butifull place

for a fort, good landing place. [Remained at the Kansas River.]

[ORDWAY] I went out hunting 2 1/2 miles & passed a fine Spring Running from under the hills I drank hearty of the water & found it the best & coolest I have seen in the country.

<sup>44</sup> Rio Grande.

<sup>45</sup> Black Hills.

<sup>46</sup> Colorado River.

June 29, 1804

[CLARK] a Court martial will Set this day at 11 oClock, to Consist of five members, for the trial of *John Collins* and *Hugh Hall*, Confined on Charges exhibited against them by Sergeant Floyd, agreeable to the articles of War.

#### *Detail for the Court*

Sergt Nat. Pryor presd.

- |    |                |        |
|----|----------------|--------|
| 2  | John Colter    | } mbs. |
| 3  | John Newmon    |        |
| 4  | Pat. Gass      |        |
| 1. | J. B. Thompson |        |
- John Potts to act as Judge advocate.

The Court Convened agreeable to order and proceeded to the trial of the Prisoners Viz *John Collins* Charged "with getting drunk on his post this morning out of whiskey put under his Charge as a Sentinal and for Suffering *Hugh Hall* to draw whiskey out of the Said Barrel intended for the party." To this Charge the prisoner plead *not guilty*.

The Court after mature deliveration on the evidence abduced &c. are of oppinion that the prisoner is *Guilty* of the Charge exibited against him, and do therefore Sentence him to recive *one hundred Lashes on his bear Back*.

*Hugh Hall* was brought with ["taking whiskey out of a Keg this morning which whiskey was Stored on the Bank (and under the Charge of the guard) Contrary to all order, rule, or regulation." To this Charge the prisoner "Pleades *Guilty*."

The Court find the prisoner guilty and Sentence him to receive *fifty* Lashes on his bare Back.

The Commanding Officers approve of the Sentence of the Court and orders that the Punishment take place at half past three this evening, at which time the party will Parade for inspection.[Camped in the vicinity of Riverside, Platte County, Missouri.]

[FLOYD] armes and amunition enspected all in Good order.

*June 30, 1804*

[CLARK] a verry large wolf<sup>47</sup> Came to the bank and looked at us this morning, passd the mouth of a Small river 10 ms. above the *Kanseis* Called by the french *Petite River Platte*<sup>48</sup> (or Shoal river) from the number of falls in it . . . came to at 12 oClock & rested three hours, the [sun or day?] being hot the men becom verry feeble, Farnsts. Thermometer at 3 oClock Stood at 96° above 0 . . . Broke our mast. [Camped in the vicinity of Walcott, Wyandotte County, Kansas.]

<sup>47</sup> Probably a gray wolf.

<sup>48</sup> Little Platte River, which joins the Missouri in Platte County, Missouri.

*July 1, 1804*

[CLARK] last night one of the Sentinals Chang'd [challenged] either a man or Beast, which run off, all prepared for action . . . one of our French hands tells me that the French intended to Settle here once & brought their Cows and put them on those Islands,<sup>49</sup> Mr Mackey Says the first village of the *Kanseis* was a little above this Island & made use of as fields, no trace of anything of that Kind remains to be Seen on the Isds. [Camped opposite Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas.]

<sup>49</sup> Perhaps Leavenworth Island, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

*July 2, 1804*

[CLARK] we Camped after dark on the S. S. opposit the 1st old Village of the *Kanzas* which was Situated in a Valley between two points

of high land . . . The french formerly had a Fort at this place, to protect the trade of this nation,<sup>50</sup> the Situation appears to be a verry elligable one for a Town . . . We made a Mast of Cotton wood. [Camped near Weston, Platte County, Missouri.]

[ORDWAY] Our flanking party did not Join us at night.

<sup>50</sup> The French Fort de Cavagnial was occupied from 1744 to 1764; it was about three miles north of Fort Leavenworth, Leavenworth County.

*July 4, 1804*

[CLARK] pass a Creek on the L. S. about 15 yards wide cuming out of an extensive Prarie as this Creek has no name, and this day is the 4th of July, we name this Independence us. Creek<sup>51</sup> . . .

The Plains of this countrey are covered with a Leek Green Grass, well calculated for the sweetest and most norushing hay—interspersed with Cops of trees, Spreading ther lofty branches over Pools Springs or Brooks of fine water. Groops of Shrubs covered with the most delicious froot is to be seen in every direction, and nature appears to have exerted herself to butify the Senery by the variety of flours Delicately and highly flavered raised above the Grass, which Strikes & profumes the Sensation, and amuses the mind throws it into Conjecterng the cause of So magnificent a Senerey in a Country thus Situated far removed from the Sivilised world to be enjoyed by nothing but the Buffalo Elk Deer & Bear in which it abounds & Savage Indians. [Camped near Doniphan, Doniphan County, Kansas.]

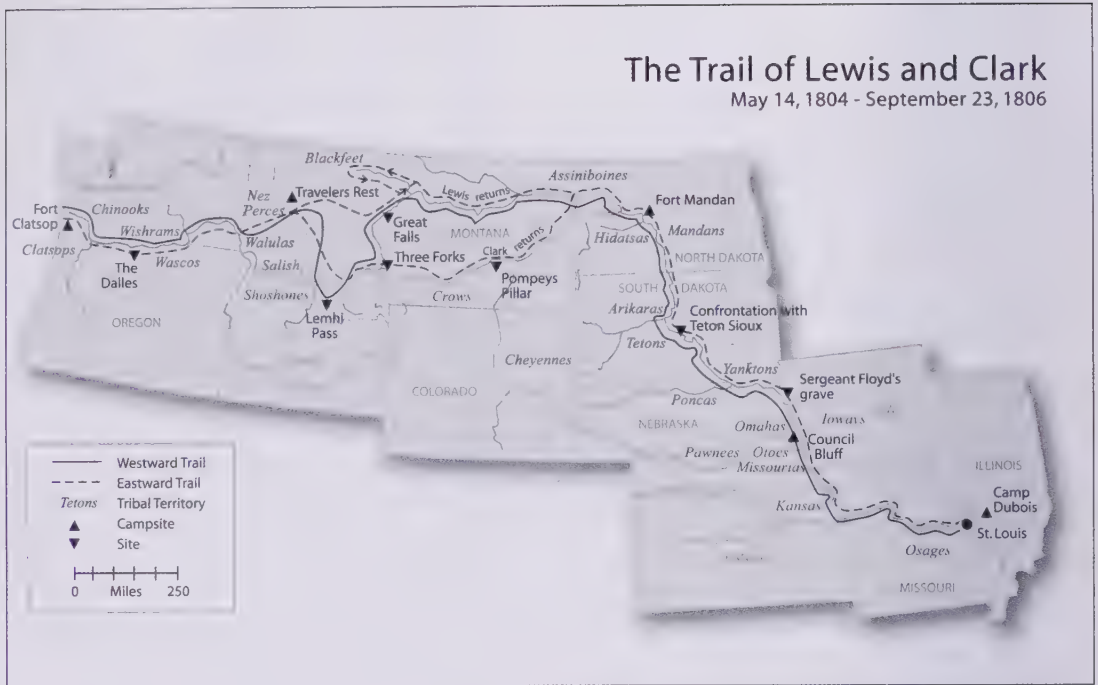
[FLOYD] a Snake Bit Jo. Fieldes on the Side of the foot which Sweled much apply Barks.<sup>52</sup>

[GASS] We fired a swivel at sunrise in honour of the day . . . and saluted the departing day with another gun.

<sup>51</sup> Independence Creek, on the Atchison-Doniphan county line, Kansas.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph Field may have had a poultice of Peruvian bark.





Source: Gary E. Moulton, *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An American Epic of Discovery*. University of Nebraska Press, 2003.

FIG. 1. *The Trail of Lewis and Clark*. Map by Sonja Barber.

July 5, 1804

[CLARK] proceeded on near the bank where the old village stood for two miles . . . The Origin of this old village is uncertain. M. de Bourgmont a French officer who Comd'd. a fort near the Town of the Missouris in about the year 1724 and in July of the Same year he visited this Village at that time the nation was numerous & well disposed towards the French . . . Those people must have been very numerous at that time as Mr. De B: was accompanied by 300 Warriors, 500 young people & 300 Dogs of burthen out of this Village<sup>53</sup> The Cause of Those Indians moving over to the Kanis river I have never learnt . . . I observe great quantities of Summer & fall Grapes, Berries & Wild roases on the banks— Deer is not so plenty as usual, great Deel of Elk Sign. [Camped a few miles northeast of Doniphan, Doniphan County, Kansas.]

<sup>53</sup> Bourgmont first visited the Missouri Indians in 1714 and lived with the Missourians and Osages for a time; he made numerous trips on the Missouri.

July 6, 1804

[CLARK] (worthy of remark that the water of this river or Some other Cause, I think that the most Probable throws out a greater preposn. of Swet than I could Suppose Could pass thro: the humane body Those men that do not work at all will wet a Shirt in a Few minits & those who work, the Swet will run off in Streams). [Camped near St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, but it is unclear whether in Kansas or Missouri.]

[ORDWAY] a whiper will perched on the Boat for a short time.

July 7, 1804

[CLARK] those Praries on the river has verry much the appearence of farms from the river Divided by narrow Strips of wood land, which wood land is Situatd. on the runs leading to the river . . . Saw a large rat on the bank. Killed a Wolf . . . one man verry Sick, Struck with the Sun, Capt. Lewis bled him & gave Niter which has revived him much.<sup>54</sup> [Camped upstream from St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, but perhaps on the Kansas side in Doniphan County.]

[ORDWAY] I went on Shore with the Horses in the afternoon In the North Side crossed a Creek 2 miles up in the evening. as this Creek is without name & my Describing it to my Capt. He named it Ordway Creek.<sup>55</sup>

[WHITEHOUSE] Six Miles from whare we Started Came to the most beautifull prarie On the E. S. Whare Nature formd Some battryes And Read Outs [redoubts].

<sup>54</sup> Bleeding was the standard medical practice of the day; potassium nitrate ("Niter") was administered to increase perspiration and urine and reduce fevers.

<sup>55</sup> Perhaps Mace Creek, north of the Andrew-Buchanan county line, Missouri.

July 8, 1804

[LEWIS AND CLARK, DETACHMENT ORDERS] The Commanding Officers Do appoint the following persons to *recieve*, *cook*, and *take charges* of the provisions which may from time to time be issued to their respective messes, (viz) John B. Thompson to Sergt. Floyd's mess, William Warner to Sergt. Ordway's mess, and John Collins to Sergt. Pryor's Mess. These *Superintendants of Provision*, are held immediately responsible to the commanding Officers for a judicious consumption of the provision which they recieve; they are to cook the same for their several messes in due time, and in such manner as is most wholesome and best calculated to afford the greatest proportion of nutriment; in their mode of cooking they are

to exercise their own judgment; they shall allso point out what part, and what proportion of the mess provisions are to be consumed at each stated meal (i. e.) morning, noon and night; nor is any man at any time to take or consume any part of the mess provisions without the privity, knowledge and consent of the Superintendent. The superintendent is also held responsible for all the cooking eutensels of his mess. in consideration of the duties imposed by this order on Thompson, Warner, and Collins, they will in future be exempt from guard duty, tho' they will still be held on the royster for that duty, and their regular tour—shall be performed by some one of their respective messes; they are exempted also from pitching the tents of the mess, collecting firewood, and forks poles &c. for cooking and drying such fresh meat as may be furnished them; those duties are to be also performed by the other members of the mess. [Camped near the mouth of Nodaway River, Andrew County, Missouri.]

July 9, 1804

[CLARK] Camped at a point on the L. S. opposit the head of the Island, our party was incamped on the Opposit Side, their not answering our Signals Caused us to Suspect the persons Camped opposit to us was a war party of Soux, we fired the Bow piece to alarm the party on Shore, alled prepared to oppose if attacted. [Camped near the present town of Iowa Point, Doniphan County, Kansas.]

July 10, 1804

[CLARK] Crossd the river with a view to See who the party was that Camped on the other Side, we Soon discovered them to be our men . . . The men of the party getting better, but much fatigued. [Camped near the Nebraska-Kansas border, but on the opposite side in Holt County, Missouri.]

July 11, 1804

[CLARK] I joined the party on a large Sand Island imediately opposit the mouth os <Ne Ma haw River>,<sup>56</sup> at which place they had

Camped, this Island is Sand about half of it Covered with Small Willows of two different Kinds, one Narrow & the other a Broad Leaf.<sup>57</sup> [Camped in Holt County, Missouri, opposite the mouth of the Big Nemaha River, which enters the Missouri River on the Nebraska side, just above the Nebraska-Kansas state line.]

<sup>56</sup> Big Nemaha River.

<sup>57</sup> Probably sandbar willow ("narrow") and peach-leaved willow ("broad leaf").

July 12, 1804

[CLARK] Concluded to Delay here to day with a view of takeing equal altitudes & making observations<sup>58</sup> as well as refreshing our men who are much fatigued— after an early Brackfast I with five men in a Perogue assended the River *Ne-Ma-haw* about 2 miles to the mouth of a Small Creek<sup>59</sup> on the Lower Side, here I got out of the Perogue, after going to Several Small Mounds in a leavel plain, I assended a hill on the Lower Side, on this hill Several Artificial Mounds<sup>60</sup> were raised, from the top of the highest of those Mounds I had an extensive view of the Serounding Plains, which afforded one of the most pleasing prospects I ever beheld, under me a Butifull River of Clear water of about 80 yards wide Mean-dering thro: a leavel and extensive Meadow, as far as I could See, the prospect Much enlivened by the fine Trees & Srubs which is bordering the bank of the river, and the Creeks & runs falling into it. The bottom land is covered with Grass<sup>61</sup> of about 4 1/2 feet high, and appears as leavel as a Smoth Surfice, the <2 bottom> is also covered with Grass and rich weeds<sup>62</sup> & flours, interspersed with Copses of the Osage Plumb. on the riseing lands, Small groves of trees are Seen, with a numbers of Grapes and a Wild Cherry resembling the Common Wild Cherry, only larger and grows on a Small bush on the tops of those hills in every derection. I observed artifical mounds (or as I may more Justly term Graves) which to me is a Strong indication of this Country being once Thickly Settled. (The Indians of

the Missouriis Still Keep up the Custom of Burying their dead on high ground) . . . on a Sandstone Bluff about 1/4 of a mile from its mouth on the Lower Side I observed Some Indian marks, went to the rock which jucted over the water and marked my name & the day of the month & year. [Remained in camp opposite the Big Nemaha River.]

[LEWIS AND CLARK] Capt. M. Lewis & W. Clark constituted themselves a Court martial for the trial of Such prisoners as are *Guilty of Capatol Crimes*, and under the rules and articles of War punishable by *Death*. *Alexander Willard* was brought foward Charged with "*Lying down and Sleeping on his post whilst a Sentinal, on the night of the 11th. Instant*" (by John Ordway Sergeant of the Guard)— To this Charge the prisoner pleads. *Guilty of Lying Down, and not Guilty, of Going to Sleep*. The Court after Duly Considering the evidence aduced, are of oppinion that the *Prisoner Alexdn. Willard* is guilty of every part of the Charge exhibited against him. it being a breach of the *rules* and articles of *War* (as well as tending to the probable distruction of the party) do *Sentence* him to receive *One hundred lashes on his bear back, at four different times in equal propation*. and order that the punishment Commence this evening at *Sunset*, and Continue to be inflicted, (by the Guard) every evening untill Completed.

<sup>58</sup> Lewis took "equal altitudes" by aiming his sextant at the sun in the morning and locking its position. In the afternoon he would sight west until the sun reached the previously locked position of the instrument. He then averaged the two recorded times (from multiple sightings in each instance) in order to obtain local apparent noon and set his chronometer accordingly.

<sup>59</sup> Probably Roys Creek, Richardson County, Nebraska.

<sup>60</sup> Part of a late prehistoric Oneota village, the Leary site.

<sup>61</sup> May be prairie cordgrass, big bluestem, and other tall grasses.

<sup>62</sup> Probably richweed.



July 13, 1804

[CLARK] My notes of the 13th of July by a Most unfortunate accident blew over Board in a Storm in the morning of the 14th obliges me to refer to the Journals of Serjeants, and my own recollection [of] the occurrences Courses Distance &c. of that day. [Camped in eastern Richardson County, Nebraska.]

\* \* \*

July 31, 1804

[FLOYD] I am verry Sick and Has ben for Somtime but have Recoverd my helth again. [Remained at the party's Council Bluff.]

August 1, 1804

[CLARK] This being my birth day I order'd a Saddle of fat Vennison, an Elk fleece & a Bevertail to be cooked and a Desert of Cheries, Plumbs, Raspberries Currents and grapes of a Supr. quallity. The Indians not yet arrived. a Cool fine eveninge Musquetors verry troublesom, the Praries Contain Cheres, Apple, Grapes, Currents, Rasp burry, Gooseberris Hastlenuts and a great Variety of Plants & flours not Common to the U.S. What a field for a Botents [botanist] and a natirless [naturalist]. [Remained at the party's Council Bluff.]

August 2, 1804

[CLARK] at Sunset Mr. *Fairfong* and a pt. of Otteau & Missourie Nation Came to Camp, among those Indians 6 were Chiefs, the principal Chiefs Capt. Lewis & myself met those Indians & informed them we were glad to See them, and would Speak to them tomorrow, Sent them Som roasted meat Pork flour & meal, in return they Sent us Water millions. [every?] man on his Guard & ready for any thing. [Remained at the party's Council Bluff.]

[FLOYD] the Indianes Came whare we had expected thay fired meney Guns when thay Came in Site of us and we ansered them with the Cannon.

[WHITEHOUSE] They [Otoes and Missourias] are a handsome stout well made set of Indians & have good open Countenances, and are of a light brown colour, and have long black hair, which they do wear without cutting; and they all use paint in order to compleat their dress.

August 3, 1804

[CLARK] after Brackfast we Collected those Indians under an orning of our Main Sail, in presence of our Party paraded & Delivered a long Speech to them expressive of our journey the wirkes of our Government, Some advice to them and Directions how They were to Conduct themselves, the princapal Chief for the nation being absente we sent him the Speech *flag* Meadel & Some Cloathes. after hering what they had to say Delivered a medal of Second Grade to one for the Ottos & and one for the Missourie present and 4 medals of a third Grade to the inferior Chief two for each tribe. Those two parts of nations, Ottos & Missouries now residing together is about 250 men are the Ottoes Composeing 2/3d and Missourie 1/3 part . . . Those Chiefs all Delivered a Speech acknowledgeing Their approbation to the Speech and promissing to prosue the advice & Derictions given them that they wer happy to find that they had fathers which might be depended on &c. We gave them a Cannister of Powder and a Bottle of whiskey and delivered a few presents to the whole after giving a Br: Cth: [breech cloth] Some Paint quartering<sup>78</sup> & a Meadele to those we *made* Cheifs after Capt Lewis's Shooting the air gun a feiw Shots (which astonished those nativs) we Set out and proceeded on five miles . . . The man *Liberty* whome we Sent for the Ottos has not Come up. [Camped in either Harrison County, Iowa, or Washington County, Nebraska, some miles south of Blair, Nebraska.]

[WHITEHOUSE] the Indians Beheavd. well while Incampd. Neer our party.

<sup>78</sup> Cloth used for making garters.

August 4, 1804

[CLARK] proceeded on . . . the Banks washing away & trees falling in constantly for 1 mile, above this place is the remains of an old Tradeing establishment L. S. where Petr. Crusest one of our hands Stayed two years & traded with the *Mahars* . . . *Reed* a man who went back to Camp for his knife has not joined us. [Camped in either Washington County, Nebraska, or Harrison County, Iowa, north-east of Blair, Nebraska.]

August 5, 1804

[LEWIS] Killed a serpent<sup>79</sup> on the bank of the river adjoining a large prairie.

	F	Inch
Length from nose to tail	5	2
Circumference in largest part—	4	1/2
Number of scuta on belly—	22	1
Do. on Tale—	53	

No pison teeth therefore think him perfectly innocent— eyes, center black with a border of pale brown yellow Colour of skin on head yellowish green with black specks on the extremity of the scuta which are pointed or triangular colour of back, transverse stripes of black and dark brown of an inch in width, succeeded by a yellowish brown of half that width— the end of the tale hard and pointed like a cock's spur— the sides are speckled with yellowish brown and black. two roes of black spots on a lite yellow ground pass throughout his whole length on the upper points of the scuta of the belly and tale 1/2 Inch apart this snake is vulgarly called the cow or bull snake from a bellowing nois which it is said sometimes to make resembling that anamal, tho' as to this fact I am unable to . . . It never having heard them make that or any other noise myself.

I have frequently observed an aquatic bird<sup>80</sup> in the cours of ascending this river but have never been able to procure one before today . . . they lay their eggs on the sand bars without shelter or nest, and produce their young from the 15th to the last of June, the

young ones of which we caught several are covered with down of a yellowish white colour and on the back some small specks of a dark brown. they bear a great resemblance to the young quale of ten days oald, and apear like them to be able to runabout and peck their food as soon as they are hatched— this bird, lives on small fish, worms and bugs which it takes on the virge of the water it is seldom seen to light on trees an qu[i]te as seldom do they lite in the water and swim tho' the foot would indicate that they did it's being webbed . . . this bird is very noyseey when flying which is dose exttreemly swift the motion of the wing is much like that of *kildee*<sup>81</sup> it has two notes one like the squaking of a small pig only on reather a high kee, and the other kit'-tee'-kit'-tee'- as near as letters can express the sound. [Camped in Harrison County, Iowa, across from the Burt-Washington county line, Nebraska.]

[CLARK] In every bend the banks are falling in from the Current being thrown against those bends by the Sand points which inlarges and the Soil I believe from unquestionable appearns. of the entire bottom from one hill to the other being the mud or ooze of the River at Some former Period mixed with Sand and Clay easily melts and Slips into the River, and the mud mixes with the water & the Sand is washed down and lodges on the points— Great quantites of Grapes on the banks, I observe three different Kinds<sup>82</sup> at this time ripe, one Of the no. is large & has the flaver of the Purple grape.

<sup>79</sup> A bullsnake.

<sup>80</sup> A least tern.

<sup>81</sup> Killdeer.

<sup>82</sup> The summer grape, river-bank grape, and winter grape.

August 6, 1804

[CLARK] We have every reason to belive that one man has *Deserted Moses B: Reed* he has been absent three Days and one french man we Sent to the Indian Camps has not joined us, we have reasons to beleve he lost himself

in attempting to join us at the *Council Bluff*. [Camped apparently in Harrison County, Iowa, about halfway between the Soldier and Little Sioux Rivers.]

August 7, 1804

[CLARK] at 1 o'clock dispatched George Drewyer, R. Fields, Wm. Bratten & Wm. Labieche back after the Deserter reid with order if he did not give up Peaceibly to put him to Death &c. to go to the Ottoes Village & enquire for La Liberty and bring him to the Mahars Village, also with a Speech on the occasion to the Ottoes & Missouries— and directing a few of their Chiefs to come to the Mahars, & we would make a peace between them & the Mahar and *Souex*, a String of wompom & a Carrot of Tobacco. [Camped a few miles below the mouth of the Little Sioux River, probably on the Iowa side in Harrison County.]

[FLOYD] on the 4th of this month one of ouer men by the name of Moses B. Reed went Back to ouer Camp whare we had Left in the morning, to Git his Knife which he Had Left at the Camp . . . pon examining his nap-Sack we found that he had taken his Cloas and all His powder and Balles, and had hid them out that night and had made that an excuse to Desarte from us with out aney Jest Case.

August 8, 1804

[GASS] In a bag under the bill and neck of the pelican, which Captain Lewis killed, we put five gallons of water. [Camped probably on the Iowa side, in southwest Monona County, not far above the Harrison County line.]

\* \* \*

August 18, 1804

[CLARK] in the after part of the Day the Party with the Indians arrivd. we meet them under a Shade near the Boat and after a Short talk we gave them Provisions to eat & proceeded to the trail of Reed, he Confessed that he "Deserted & Stold a public Rifle"<sup>93</sup> Shot-pouch

Powder & Bals" and requested we would be as favourable with him as we Could consistantly with our Oathes—which we were and only Sentenced him to run the Gantlet four times through the Party & that each man with 9 Swichies Should punish him and for him not to be considered in future as one of the Party— The three principal Chiefs petitioned for Pardin for this man After we explained the injurey Such men could doe them by false representation, & explang. the Customs of our Countrey they were all Satisfied with the propriety of the Sentence & was witness to the punishment. after which we had Some talk with the Chiefs about the orrigan of the war between them & the Mahars &c. it commenced in this way I'e' in two of the Missouries Tribe resideing with the Ottoes went to the Mahars to Steel horses, they Killed them both which was a cause of revenge on the part of the Missouris & Ottoes, they also brought war on themselves Nearly in the Same way with the Panea Loups and they are greatly in fear of a just revenge from the Panies for takeing their Corn from the Pania Towns in their absence hunting this Summer. the evening was Closed with an extra Gill of Whiskey & a Dance untill 11 o'clock. [Remained at Fish Camp.]

<sup>93</sup> Reed's "public Rifle" may have been one of the party's U.S. Model 1803 rifles that Lewis acquired at the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in present West Virginia.

August 19, 1804

[CLARK] at 10 o'clock we assembled the Cheifs & Warriars under an Orning and delivered a Speech, explanitary of the One Sent to this Nation from the *Council Bluff*, &c.

*Children* When we Sent the 4 men to your towns, we expected to See & Speake with the Mahas by the time you would arrive and to lay the foundation of a peace between you and them

*The Speech of Petieit Villeu Little Thief*, If you think right and Can waite untill all our Warriars Come from the Buffalows hunt, we Can then tell you who is our men of Con-



sequence— My fathers always lived with the father of the B together & we always live with the Big hose— all the men here are the Suns of Chief and will be glad to get Something from the hands of their fathers. My father always directed me to be friendly with the white people, I have always done So and went often to the french, give my party pieces of Paper & we will be glad . . .

*The Speech of the Big Horse* I went to the hunt Buffalow I heard your word and I returned, I and all my men with me will attend to your words— you want to make peace with all, I want to make peace also, the young me[n] when they want to go to war where is the goods you give me to Keep them at home, if you give me Some Whisky to give a Drop to my men at home. I came here naked and must return home naked. if I have Something to give the young men I can prevent their going to war. You want to make peace with all, It is good we want Something to give my men at home. I am a pore man, and cant quiet without means, a Spoon ful of your milk will qui[e]t all . . .

Sergt. Floyd was taken violently bad with the Beliose Cholick [bilious colic] and is dangerously ill we attempt in Vain to releive him, I am much concerned for his Situation— we could get nothing to Stay on his Stomach a moment nature appear exosting fast in him every man is attentive to him <york prlly>.[Remained at Fish Camp.]

August 20, 1804

[CLARK] Serjeant Floyd as bad as he can be no pulse & nothing will Stay a moment on his Stomach or bowels— Passed two Islands on the S. S. and at first Bluff on the S S. Serj. Floyd Died with a great deel of Composure, before his death he Said to me, "I am going away" ["I want you to write me a letter"— We buried him on the top of the bluff 1/2 Miles below a Small river to which we Gave his name, he was buried with the Honors of War much lamented; a Seeder post with the Name Sergt. C. Floyd died here 20th of August 1804 was fixed at the head of his grave— This

Man at all times gave us proofs of his firmness and Deturmined resolution to doe Service to his Countrey and honor to himself after paying all the honor to our Decesed brother we Camped in the mouth of floyds river about 30 yards wide, a butifull evening. [Camped just above the mouth of Floyd River, Sioux City, Woodbury County, Iowa.]

[GASS] Here Sergeant Floyd died, notwithstanding every possible effort was made by the commanding officers, and other persons, to save his life.

\* \* \*

## Chapter 2

The Middle Missouri

August 25-October 26, 1804

\* \* \*

August 26, 1804

[LEWIS AND CLARK, DETACHMENT ORDERS] The commanding officers have thought it proper to appoint Patric Gass, a Sergeant in the corps of volunteers for North Western Discovery, he is therefore to be obeyed and respected accordingly. Sergt. Gass is directed to take charge of the late Sergt. Floyd's mess . . . The Commanding officers have every reason to hope from the previous faithfull services of Sergt. Gass, that this expression of their approbation will be still further confirmed, by his vigilant attention in future to his duties as a Sergeant. the Commanding officers are still further confirmed in the high opinion they had previously formed of the capacity, deligence and integrety of Sergt. Gass, from the wish expressed by a large majority of his comrades for his appointment as Sergeant. [Camped in Clay County, South Dakota, opposite the mouth of Bow Creek, Cedar County, Nebraska.]

August 27, 1804

[CLARK] G. Drewyer Came up and informed that he Could neither find Shannon nor horses,

we Sent Shields & J Fields, back to hunt Shannon & the horses . . . we had the Prairie Set on fire to let the Souix See that we were on the river, & as a Signal for them to Come to it. at 2 oClock passed the mouth of *River Jacque*, or Yeankton one Indian at the mouth of this river Swam to the Perogue, we landed and two others came to us, those Inds. informed that a large Camp of Soues, were on R. Jacque near the mouth. we Sent Sergt. Pryor & a Frenchman with Mr. Durioin the Souis interpeteter to the Camp with derections to invite the Principal Chiefs to councel with us at a Bluff above Called the Calumet. [Camped between the mouth of the James River and the town of Yankton, Yankton County, South Dakota.]

August 28, 1804

[CLARK] Capt Lewis & my Self much indisposed— I think from the Homney w[e] Substitute in place of bread, (or Plumbs). [Camped in Cedar County, Nebraska, just below present Gavins Point Dam, at the party's Calumet Bluff camp.]

[CLARK] one of the Perogues run a Snag thro her and was near Sinking in the opinions of the Crew— we came too below the *Calumet Bluff* and formed a camp in a Butifull Plain near the foot of the high land which rises with a gradual assent . . . The Perogue which was injurd I had unloaded and the Loading put into the other Perogue which we intended to Send back . . . after examoning her & finding that She was unfit for Service deturmined to Send her back by the party Some load which was in the Perogue much inju'd . . . J. Shields & J. Fields who was Sent back to look for Shannon & the Horses joined us & informed that Shannon had the horses a head and that they Could not over take him This man not being a first rate Hunter, we deturmined to Send one man in pursute of him with Some Provisions.

August 29, 1804

[CLARK] I am much engaged reriteing— at 4 oClock P M. Sergt. Pryor & Mr. Dorion with

5 Chiefs and about 70 men &c. arrived on the opposite Side we Sent over a Perogue & Mr. Dorrior & his Son<sup>2</sup> who was tradeing with the Indians Came over with Serjt Pryer, and informed us that the Chiefs were there we Sent Serjt. Pryor & yound Mr. Dorion with Som Tobacco, Corn & a few Kittles for them to Cook in, with directions to inform the Chiefs that we would Speek to them tomorrow . . . Serjt. Pryor informs me that when Came near the Indian Camp they were met by men with a Buffalow roabe to Carry them, Mr. Dorion informed [“]they were not the Owners of the Boats & did not wish to be Carried”— the Sceouex Camps<sup>3</sup> are handson of a Conic form Covered with Buffalow Roabs Painted different Colours and all Compact & hand Somly arranged, covered all round an orpen part in the Center for the fire, with Buffalow roabs each Lodg has a place for Cooking detached, the lodges contain 10 to 15 persons— a Fat Dog was presented as a mark of their Great respect for the party of which they partook hartily and thought it good & well flavored. [Remained at Calumet Bluff camp.]

[ORDWAY] we have plenty of fine fat Cat fish the most of the Time. Several large ones caught last night. The Missouri river affords us plenty of fish, & the Country plenty of all kinds of Game.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Dorion Sr. and his son, Pierre Dorion Jr.

<sup>3</sup> Yankton Sioux.

August 30, 1804

[CLARK] after Prepareing Some presents for the Chiefs which we intended make by giving Meadals, and finishing a Speech what we intend'd to give them, we Sent Mr. Dorion in a Perogue for the Chiefs & warreirs to a Council under an Oak tree near wher we had a flag flying on a high flag Staff at 12 OClock we met and Cap L. Delivered the Speach & thin made one great Chiff by giving him a meadal & Some Cloathes one 2d Chief & three third Chiefs in the Same way, They recvd. those thing with the goods and tobacco with plea-

sure To the Grand Chief we gave a Flag and the parole<sup>4</sup> & wampom with a hat & Chiefs Coat, we Smoked out of the pipe of peace, & the Chiefs retired to a Bourey [bowery] made of bushes by their young men to Divide their presents and Smoke eat and Council . . . The Souix is a Stout bold looking people, (the young men hand Som) & well made, the greater part of them make use of Bows & arrows, Some fiew fusees<sup>5</sup> I observe among them . . . the Warriors are Verry much deckerated with Paint Porcupin quils & feathers, large leagins & mockersons, all with buffalow roabs of Different Colours. the Squars wore Petic coats & and a white Buffalow roabes with the black hair turned back over their necks & Sholders. [Remained at Calumet Bluff camp.]

[ORDWAY] after dark we Made a large fire for the Indians to have a war dance, all the young men prepared themselves for the dance. Some of them painted themselves in curious manner Some of the Boys had their faces & foreheads all painted white & C a drum was prepared, the Band began to play on their little Instruments, & the drum beat & they Sang. the young men commenced dancing around the fire. it always began with a houp & hollow & ended with the Same, and in the intervalles, one of the warries at a time would rise with his weapon & Speak of what he had done in his day, & what warlike actions he had done &c. this they call merriit & C they would confess how many they had killed & of what nation they were off & how many horses they had Stole & C— they Camped along Side of us & behaved honestly.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis and Clark carried certificates ("parole") to present to Indian dignitaries. The documents declared the recipient to be an ally of the United States and one who should be treated in a friendly manner.

<sup>5</sup> Fusils, a type of musket.

August 31, 1804

[CLARK] I took a Vocabulary of the Scioux Language— and the Answer to a fiew quaries Such a[s] refured to ther Situation, Trade,

number War, &c. This Nation is Divided into 20 Tribes, possessing Seperate interests— Collectively they are noumerous Say from 2 to 3000 men, their interests are so unconnected that Some bands are at war with Nations which other bands are on the most friendly terms. This Great Nation who the French has given the nickname of Sciouex, Call them selves *Dar co tar* their language is not peculiarly their own, they Speak a great number of words, which is the Same in every respect with the Maha, Poncaser, Osarge & Kanzies. which Clearly proves that those nation at Some Period not more that a century or two past [were once?] the Same nation— Those *Dar ca ter's* or Scioux inhabit or rove over the Countrey on the Red river of Lake Winipeck, St. Peter's & the West of the Missippie above Prarie De chain heads of River Demoin, and the Missouri and its waters on the N. Side for a great extent. They are only at peace with 8 Nations, & agreeable to their Calculation at war with twenty odd. Their trade Coms from the British, except this Band and one on Demoin who trade with the Traders of St Louis— The[y] furnish *Beaver* Martain,<sup>6</sup> <Loues><sup>7</sup> Pikon,<sup>8</sup> Bear and Deer Skins—and have about 40 Traders among them. The *Dar co tar* or Sceouex rove & follow the Buffalow raise no corn or any thing else the woods & praries affording a Suffcency, the[y] eat Meat, and Substitute the Ground potato<sup>9</sup> which grow in the Plains for bread. [Remained at Calumet Bluff camp.]

<sup>6</sup> Marten.

<sup>7</sup> Wolf.

<sup>8</sup> Fisher or lynx.

<sup>9</sup> Indian breadroot.

\* \* \*

September 17, 1804

[LEWIS] Having for many days past confined myself to the boat, I determind to devote this day to amuse myself on shore with my gun and view the interior of the country lying between the river and the Corvus Creek—<sup>18</sup> accordingly before sunrise I set out with six of my



best hunters . . . the country breakes off] as usual into a fine leavel plain extending-as far as the eye can reach. from this plane I had an extensive view of the river below, and the irregular hills which border the opposite sides of the river and creek. the surrounding country had been birnt about a month before and young grass had now sprung up to hight of 4 Inches presenting the live green of the spring. to the West a high range of hills, strech across the country from N. to S and appeared distant about 20 miles . . . this senery already rich pleasing and beatiful, was still farther hightened by immense herds of Buffaloe deer Elk and Antelopes which we saw in every direction feeding on the hills and plains . . . we found the Antelope extreemly shy and watchfull insomuch that we had been unable to get a shot at them; when at rest they generally seelect the most elivated point in the neighbourhood, and as they are watchfull and extreemly quick of sight and their sense of smelling very accute it is almost impossible to approach them within gunshot; in short they will frequently discover and flee from you at the distance of three miles . . . antilopes which had disappeared in a steep revezne now appeared at the distance of about three miles on the side of a ridge which passed obliquely across me and extended about four miles. so soon had these antelopes gained the distance at which they had again appeared to my view I doubted at ferst that they were the same that I had just surprised, but my doubts soon vanished when I beheld the rapidity of their flight along the ridge before me it appeared reather the rappid flight of birds than the motion of quadrupeds. I think I can safely venture the asscertion that the speed of this anamal is equal if not superior to that of the finest blooded courser. [Remained near Oacoma.]

[CLARK] Colter Killed . . . a curious kind of deer<sup>19</sup> of a Dark gray Colr. more so than common, hair long & fine, the ears large & long, a Small reseptual under the eyes; like an Elk, the Taile about the length of Common Deer, round (like a Cow) a tuft of black hair about

the end, this Speces of Deer jumps like a goat or Sheep.

<sup>18</sup> American Crow Creek, Lyman County, South Dakota.

<sup>19</sup> Mule deer.

*September 18, 1804*

[CLARK] I Killed a Prarie Wollf, about the Size of a gray fox bushey tail head & ear like a wolf, Some fur Burrows in the ground and barks like a Small Dog. what has been taken heretofore for the Fox was those wolves, and no Foxes has been Seen; The large wolves are very numourous, they are of a light Colr. large & has long hair with Corrs fur. [Camped a few miles northeast of Oacoma, Lyman County, South Dakota.]

[ORDWAY] the Bones of the woolf was taken apart and Saved as well as the Skins . . . in order to Send back to the States next Spring, with the other curiosities.

*September 20, 1804*

[GASS] passed a long chain of bluffs on the north side, of a dark colour. From these and others of the same kind the Missouri gets its muddy colour. The earth of which they are composed dissolves like sugar; every rain washes down great quantities of it, and the rapidity of the stream keeps it mixing and afloat in the water, until it reaches the mouth of the Mississippi. [Camped on an island in Hughes County, South Dakota.]

*September 21, 1804*

[CLARK] at half past one oClock this morning the Sand bar on which we Camped began to under mind and give way which allarmed the Sergeant on Guard, the motion of the boat awakened me; I get up & by the light of the moon observed that the land had given away both above and below our Camp & was falling in fast . . . we had pushed off but a few minets before the bank under which the Boat & perogus lay give way, which would Certainly have Sunk both Perogues, by the time we made

the opsd. Shore our Camp fell in . . . at Day-light proceeded on to the Gouge of this Great bend<sup>20</sup> and Brackfast, we Sent a man to measure step off the Distance across the gouge, he made it 2000 yds. The distance arround is 30 mes. [Camped on an island in Hughes County, South Dakota.]

<sup>20</sup> Big Bend of the Missouri, Lyman County, South Dakota.

\* \* \*

September 25, 1804

[CLARK] a fair morning the wind from the S. E. all well, raised a Flag Staff & made a orning or Shade on a Sand bar in the mouth of Teton River for the purpose of Speeking with the Indians under, the Boat Crew on board at 70 yards Distance from the bar The 5 Indians which we met last night Continued, about 11 oClock the 1s & 2d Chief Came we gave them Some of our Provsions to eat, they gave us great quantites of meet Some of which was Spoiled we feel much at a loss for the want of an interperter the one we have can Speak but little.

Met in council at 12 oClock and after Smokeing, agreeable to the usial Custom, Cap Lewis proceeded to Deliver a Speech which we oblige to Curtail for want of a good interperter all our Party paraded. gave a medal to the Grand Chief Calld. in Indian *Un ton gar Sar bar* in French *Beefe nure* Black Buffalow<sup>26</sup> Said to be a good man, 2 Chief *Torto hon gar*—or the *Partisan*<sup>27</sup>—or Partizan—*bad* the 3rd is the *Beffe De Medison*<sup>28</sup> his name is *Tar ton gar wa ker* . . .

Envited those Cheifs on board to Show them our boat and Such Curiossities as was Strange to them, we gave them 1/4 a glass of whiskey which they appeared to be very fond of, Sucked the bottle after it was out & Soon began to be troublesom, one the 2d Cheif assumeing Drunkness, as a Cloake for his rascally intentions I went with those Cheifs (which left the boat with great reluctance) to Shore with a view of reconseleing those men

to us, as Soon as I landed the Perogue three of their young men Seased the Cable of the Perogue the Chiefs Soldr. Huged the mast, and the 2d Chief was verry insolent both in words & justures declareing I Should not go on, Stateing he had not recved presents Suffient from us, his justures were of Such a personal nature I felt my Self Compeled to Draw my Sword, at this motion Capt. Lewis ordered all under arms in the boat, those with me also Showed a Disposition to Defend themselves and me, the grand Chief then took hold of the roop & ordered the young warrers away, I felt my Self warm & Spoke in verry positive terms

Most of the warriers appeared to have ther Bows Strung and took out their arrows from ther quves. as I was not permitted to return, I Sent all the men except 2 Inpt. [interpreters] to the boat, the perogu Soon returned with about 12 of our detumind men ready for any event this movement caused a no: of the Indians to withdraw at a distance, Their treatment to me was verry rough & I think justified roughness on my part, they all left my Perogue and Councild. with themselves the result I could not lern and nearly all went off after remaining in this Situation Some time I offered my hand to the 1 & 2 Chief who refusd to recve it. I turned off & went with my men on board the perogue, I had not progd. more the 10 paces before the 1st Cheif 3rd & 2 Brave men waded in after me. I took them in & went on board

we proceeded on about 1 mile & anchored out off a willow Island placed a guard on Shore to protect the Cooks & a guard in the boat, fastened the Perogues to the boat, I call this Island *bad humered* Island as we were in a *bad humer*. [Camped on later Marion Island, opposite Pierre, Hughes County, South Dakota.]

[ORDWAY] the large Swivel loaded immediately with 16 Musquet Ball in it the 2 other Swivels loaded well with Buck Shot, Each of them manned. Capt. Clark used moderation with them told them that we must and would go on the chief Sayed he had warriers too and

if we were to go on they would follow us and kill [us] then Capt. Clark told them that we were Sent by their great father the president of the U. S. and that if they misused us that he or Capt. Lewis could by writing to him have them all destroyed as it were in a moment the chief then let go the Cable, and Sayed that he was Sorry.

<sup>26</sup> Black Buffalo.

<sup>27</sup> The Partisan.

<sup>28</sup> Buffalo Medicine.

September 26, 1804

[CLARK] (they [Tetons] offered us women, which we did not except). [Camped about four miles north of Fort Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota.]

[CLARK] [The Tetons] appear Spritely, generally ill looking & not well made thier legs & arms Small . . . they Grese & <Black> themselves with coal when they dress, make use of a hawks feather about their heads the men a robe & each a polecats<sup>29</sup> Skins, for to hold ther *Bais roly*<sup>30</sup> for Smokeing fond of Dress & Show badly armed with fuseis [fusils] &. The Squaws are Chearfull fine lookg womin not handson, High Cheeks Dressed in Skins a Peticoat and roab which foldes back over thir Sholder, with long wool. doe all ther laborious work & I may Say perfect Slaves to the men, as all Squars of nations much at war . . . after Comeing too Capt. Lewis & 5 men went on Shore with the Chiefs, who appeared desposed to make up & be friendly, after Captain Lewis had been on Shore about 3 hours I became uneasy for fear of Some Deception & sent a Serjeant to See him and know his treatment which he reported was friendly, & thy were preparing for a Dance this evening

The[y] made frequent Selecitiation for us to remain one night only and let them Show their good disposition towards us, we deturmined to remain, after the return of Capt. Lewis, I went on Shore I saw Several Maha Prisoners and Spoke to the Chiefs it was necessary to give those prisoners up & become

good friends with the Mahars if they wished to follow the advice of their Great father I was in Several Lodges neetly formed as before mentioned as to the Bauruly Tribe<sup>31</sup>— I was met by about 10 well Dressd. yound men who took me up in a roabe Highly a decrated and Set me Down by the Side of their Chief on a Dressed robe in a large Council House this house formed a 3/4 Cercle of Skins well Dressed and Sown together under this Shelter about 70 men Set forming a Circle in front of the Chiefs a plac of 6 feet Diameter was Clear and the pipe of peace raised on Sticks under which there was Swans down Scattered, on each Side of the Circle two Pipes, The flags of Spain 2 & the Flag we gave them in front of the Grand Chief . . .

Soon after they set me Down, the men went for Capt Lewis brough him in the same way and placed him also by the Chief in a fiew minits an old man rose & Spoke approveing what we had done & informing us of their Situation requesting us to take pity on them &c which was answered— The Great Chief then rose with great State to the Same purpote as far as we Could learn & then with Great Solemnity took up the pipe of peace whin the principal Chiefs Spoke with the pipe of Peace he took in one hand Some of the most Delicate parts of the Dog which was prepared for the feist & made a Sacrifise to the flag— & after pointing it to the heavins the 4 quarter of the Globe & the earth, lit it and prosist presented the Stem to us to Smoke, after a Smoke had taken place, & a Short Harange to his people, we were requested to take the meal we Smoked for an hour [until] Dark & all was Cleared away a large fire made in the Center, about 10 misitions playing on tamberins long sticks with Deer & Goats Hoofs tied So as to make a gingling noise and many others of a Similer kind, those men began to Sing, & Beet on the Tamboren, the women Came foward highly Deckerated in theire way, with the Scalps and Trofies of war of ther father Husbands Brothers or near Connection & proceeded to Dance the war Dance which they done with Great Chearfullness untill 12



oClock when we informed the Cheifs that they were fatigued &c. they then retired & we Accompd. by 4 Chiefs returned to our boat, they Stayed with us all night. Those people have Some brave men which they make use of as Soldiers those men attend to the police of the Village Correct all errors<sup>32</sup> I saw one of them to day whip 2 Squars who appeared to have fallen out, when he approachd all about appeared to flee with great turrow at night thy keep two 3 4 or 5 men at deffinit Distances walking around Camp Singing the accurrences of the night . . .

I Saw & eat *Pemitigon*<sup>33</sup> the Dog, Grou[n]d potatoe<sup>34</sup> made into a Kind of homney, which I thought but little inferior— I also Saw a Spoon made of a horn of an animile of the Sheep kind<sup>35</sup> the spoon will hold 2 quarts.

<sup>29</sup> Colloquial name for a skunk.

<sup>30</sup> *Bois roulé*, otherwise kinnikinnick: a mixture of barks with tobacco.

<sup>31</sup> Clark's mention of *Bois Brulé* is in error; he meant the Yanktons.

<sup>32</sup> The Teton soldiers were members of a warrior society, *akicita*, who acted as a constabulary.

<sup>33</sup> *Pemmican* is dried, pulverized meat mixed with berries.

<sup>34</sup> Indian potato.

<sup>35</sup> Bighorn sheep.

September 27, 1804

[CLARK] (when a[ny] of thos people Die they pierce ther flesh with arrows above & below ther elbows as a testimony of ther grief) after a delay of half an hour I went with them on Shore, they left the boat with reluctance (we Suspect they are treacherous and are at all times guarded & on our guard) They again offered me a young woman and wish me to take her & not Dispipe them, I wavered the Subject, at Dark the Dance began as usial and performed as last night. [Remained at camp north of Fort Pierre.]

[CLARK] Capt. Lewis came on Shore and we Continued untill we were Sleepy & returned to our boat, the 2nd Chief & one principal

man accompanid us, those two Indians accompanied me on board in the Small Perogue, Capt. Lewis with a guard Still on Shore, the man who Steered not being much acustomed to Steer, passed the bow of the boat & peroge Came broad Side against the Cable & broke it which obliged me to order in a loud voice all hands up & at their ores, my preemty order to the men and the bustle of their getting to their ores allarmd the Cheifs, togethr with the appearance of the men on Shore, as the boat turnd. The Cheif hollowered & allarmed the Camp or Town informing them that the Mahars was about attacking us. in about 10 minits the bank was lined with men armed the 1st Cheif at their head, about 200 men appeared and after about 1/2 hour returned all but about 60 men who Continued on the bank all night, the Cheifs Contd. all night with us— This allarm I as well as Captn. Lewis Considered as the Signal of their intentions (which was to Stop our proceeding on our journey and if Possible rob us) we were on our Guard all night, the misfortune of the loss of our Anchor obliged us to Lay under a falling bank much exposd. to the accomplishment of their hostile intentions P. C[ruzatte]—our Bowman who Cd. Speek Mahar informed us in the night that the Maha Prisoners informed him we were to be Stopped— we Shew as little Signs of a Knowledge of their intentions as possible all prepared on board for any thing which might hapen, we kept a Strong guard all night in the boat no sleep.

[GASS] the Indians made preparations for a dance. At dark it commenced. Captain Lewis, myself and some of our party went up to see them perform. Their band of musick, or orchestra, was composed of about twelve persons beating on a buffaloe hide, and shaking small bags that made a rattling noise. They had a large fire in the centre of their camp; on one side the women, about 80 in number, formed in a solid column round the fire, with sticks in their hands, and the scalps of the Mahas they had killed, tied on them. They kept moving, or jumping round the fire, rising

and falling on both feet at once; keeping a continual noise, singing and yelling. In this manner they continued till 1 o'clock at night.

*September 28, 1804*

[CLARK] when we was about Setting out the Class Called the Soldiers took possession of the Cable the 1s Chief which was Still on board & intended to go a Short distance up with us, I told him the men of his nation Set on the Cable, he went out & told Capt Lewis who was at the bow the men who Set on the Roap was Soldiers and wanted Tobacco Capt. L. Said would not agree to be forced into any thing, the 2d Chief Demanded a flag & Tobacco which we refusd. to Give Stateing proper reasons to them for it after much difucelty—which had nearly reduced us to hostility I threw a Carot of Tobacco to 1s Chief Spoke So as to touch his pride took the port fire from the gunner the Chief gives the Tobaco to his Soldiers & he jurked the rope from them and handed it to the bows man . . . I am Verry unwelle for want of Sleep Deturmined to Sleep to night if possible, the men Cooked & we rested well. [Camped on a sandbar about three miles above Oahe Dam, Stanley and Hughes Counties, South Dakota; the area is now inundated by Lake Oahe.]

[GASS] While I was at the Indian camp yesterday they yoked a dog to a kind of car,<sup>36</sup> which they have to haul their baggage from one camp to another; the nation having no settled place or village, but are always moving about. The dogs are not large, much resemble a wolf, and will haul about 70 pounds each.

<sup>36</sup> Indian dog travois.

*September 29, 1804*

[CLARK] at 9 oClock we observed the 2d Chief with 2 men and Squars on Shore . . . we refused to let one more Come on board Stateing Suffient reasons, observd they would walk on Shore to the place we intended to Camp, ofered us women we objected and told them we Should not Speake to another teton except the one on board with us, who might go on

Shore when ever he pleased, those Indians proceeded on untill later in the evening when the Chief requested that the Perogue might put him across the river which we agreed to. [Camped on a sandbar between Stanley and Sully Counties, South Dakota, about three and one-half miles above Chantier Creek, Stanley County.]

*September 30, 1804*

[CLARK] the Stern of the boat got fast on a log and the boat turned & was verry near filling before we got her righted, the waves being verry high, The Chief on board was So fritined at the motion of the boat which in its rocking caused Several loose articles to fall on the Deck from the lockers, he ran off and hid himself, we landed he got his gun and informed us he wished to return, that all things were Cleare for us to go on we would not See *any* more Tetons &c. [Camped on a sandbar in Sully County, South Dakota, just below the mouth of Cheyenne River opposite.]

*October 1, 1804*

[CLARK] Sand bars are So noumerous, that it is impossible to discribe them, & think it unnecessary to mention them. we Saw a man opposit to our Camp on the L. S. which we discovd. to be a Frenchman . . . This Mr. *Jon Vallie*<sup>37</sup> informs us that he wintered last winter 300 Leagues up the Chien River under the Black mountains, he informs that this river is verry rapid and dificiult even for Canoos to assend . . . The black Mountains he Says is verry high, and Some parts of it has Snow on it in the Summer great quantities of Pine Grow on the mountains, a great noise is heard frequently on those mountains, on the mountains great numbers of goat, and a kind of Anamale with large Circuler horns,<sup>38</sup> This animale is nearly the Size of an Argalia Small Elk. White bear<sup>39</sup> is also plenty— The Chien Inds.<sup>40</sup> <are about 300 lodges they> inhabit this river principally, and Steel horses from the Spanish Settlements <to the S W> This excurtion they make in one month . . . This frenchman gives an account of a white booted turkey<sup>41</sup> an inhabitant of the Cout Noie.<sup>42</sup>

[Camped on a sandbar a few miles above the mouth of Cheyenne River, in either Dewey or Sully Counties, South Dakota.]

[LEWIS AND CLARK, WEATHER REMARKS] the leaves of the ash popular & most of the shrubs begin to turn yellow and decline.

<sup>37</sup> Jean Vallé, a trader from Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.

<sup>38</sup> Bighorn sheep.

<sup>39</sup> Grizzly bear.

<sup>40</sup> Cheyenne Indians.

<sup>41</sup> Probably the sharp-tailed grouse.

<sup>42</sup> Black Hills.

\* \* \*

October 9, 1804

[CLARK] all the grand Chiefs visited us to day also Mr Taboe,<sup>48</sup> a trader from St. Louis—Many Canoes of a Single Buffalow Skin<sup>49</sup> made in the form of a Bowl Carrying generally 3 and Sometimes 5 & 6 men, those Canoes, ride the highest Waves . . . I saw at Several times to day 3 Squars in single Buffalow Skin Canoes loaded with meat Cross the River, at the time the waves were as high as I ever Saw them in the Missouri. [Remained at the camp between Oak and Fisher Creeks.]

[CLARK] the three great Chiefs [of the Arikaras] . . .

1st Chiefs name *Kakawissassa* (lighting Crow.)

2d do do *Pocasse* (or Hay)

3d do do *Piaheto* (or Eagles feather)

<sup>48</sup> Pierre-Antoine Tabeau, associated with Gravelines.

<sup>49</sup> Possibly bullboats, hemispherical vessels covered with buffalo skins.

October 10, 1804

[CLARK] the Inds. much astonished at my black Servent, who made him Self more turrible in thier view than I wished him to Doe as I am told telling them that before I cought him he

was wild & lived upon people, young children was verry good eating Showed them his Strength &c. [Remained at the camp between Oak and Fisher Creeks.]

[CLARK] we prepare all things ready to Speak to the Indians, Mr. Tabo & Mr. Gravalin Came to brackfast with us the Chiefs & came from the lower Town, but none from the 2 upper Towns, which is the largest . . . at 12 oClock Dispatchd Gravelin to envite them to Come down, we have every reason to believe that a jellousy exists between the Villages for fear of our makeing the 1st Cheif from the lower Village, at one oClock the Cheifs all assembled & after Some little Cerrimony the Council Commenced, we informd them what we had told the others before i' e' Ottoes & Seaux. made 3 Cheif 1 for each Village. gave them presents. after the Council was Over we Shot the air guns which astonished them much, the[y] then Departed and we rested Secure all night.

[GASS] The following is a description of the form of these lodges and the manner of building them. In a circle of a size suited to the dimensions of the intended lodge, they set up 16 forked posts five or six feet high, and lay poles from one fork to another. Against these poles they lean other poles, slanting from the ground, and extending about four inches above the cross poles: these are to receive the ends of the upper poles, that support the roof. They next set up four large forks, fifteen feet high, and about ten feet apart, in the middle of the area; and poles or beams between these. The roof poles are then laid on extending from the lower poles across the beams which rest on the middle forks, of such a length as to leave a hole at the top for a chimney. The whole is then covered with willow branches, except the chimney and a hole below to pass through. On the willow branches they lay grass and lastly clay. At the hole below they build a pen about four feet wide and projecting ten feet from the hut; and hang a buffaloe skin, at the entrance of the hut for a door. This labour like every other kind is chiefly performed by the squaws.



October 11, 1804

[CLARK] at 11 oClock we met the Grand Chief in Council & and he made a Short Speech thanking us for what we had Given him & his nation promisseing to attend to the Council we had given him & informed us the road was open & no one dare Shut it, & we might Departe at pleasure, at 1 oClock we Set out for the upper villages 3 miles distant . . . after being treated by every civility by those people who are both pore & Durtey we returned to our boat at about 10 oClk. P M. informing them before we Departed that we would Speak to them tomorrow at there Seperate Villages. Those people gave us to eate bread made of Corn & Beens, also Corn & Beans boild. a large Been,<sup>50</sup> which they rob the mice of the Prarie which is rich & verry nurrishing also Squashes &c. all Tranquillity. [Camped a few miles above Fisher Creek, Corson County, South Dakota.]

[ORDWAY] Some of the party down at the village below this last night they informed us that one of the chiefs lost all the good he Recd. from us in the River, Going home. the Skin cannoe got over Set turned every thing out of it he Grieved himself considerable about his loss &C.

<sup>50</sup> Product of the hog peanut, gathered from the stores of the meadow mouse.

October 12, 1804

[CLARK] went to the house of the 2nd Chief *Lassil*<sup>51</sup> where there was many Chief and warriers & about 7 bushels of Corn, a pr Leagins a twist of their Tobacco & Seeds of 2 Kind of Tobacco we Set Some time before the Councill Commenced this man Spoke at Some length declareing his dispotion to believe and prosue our Councils, his intention of going to Visit his great father acknowledged the Satisfaction in receiveing the presents &c. rais'g a Doubt as to the Safty on passing the nations below particularly the Souex. requested us to take a Chief of their nation and make a good pact with Mandins<sup>52</sup> & nations above. after answering those parts of the 2d Chiefs Speech which required it, which appeared to give

General Satisfaction we went to the Village of the 3rd Chief and as usual Some Serimony took place before he Could Speak to us on the Great Subject . . .

The Nation of the Rickerries is about 600 men able to bear arms a Great perpotion of them have fusees they appear to be peacefull, their men tall and perpotiend, womin Small and industerous, raise great quantities of Corn Beens Simmins<sup>53</sup> &c. also Tobacco for the men to Smoke they Collect all the wood and do the drugery as Common amongst Savages. Thise <nation is> made up of <10> Different Tribes of the Pania, who had formerly been Seperate, but by Commotion and war with their neighbours have Come reduced and compelled to Come together for protection, The Curruption of the language of those different Tribes has So reduced the language that the Different Villages do not understade all the words of the others. Those people are Durtey, Kind, pore, & extravigent pursessing national pride. not beggarley reive what is given with great pleasure . . .

Those people express an inclination to be at peace with all nations— The Seaux who trade the goods which they get of the British Traders for their corn, and great influence over the Rickeres, poison their minds and keep them in perpetual dread . . .

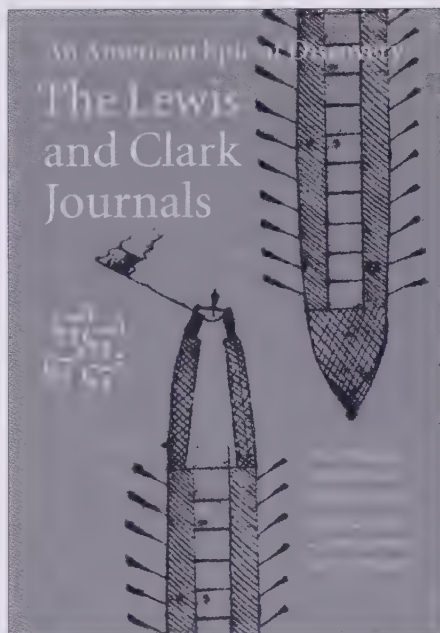
a curious Cuistom with the Souix as well as the reckeres is to give handsom Squars to those whome they wish to Show Some acknowledgements to— The Seaux we got Clare of without taking their Squars, they followed us with Squars . . . two days. The Rickores we put off dureing the time we were at the Towns but 2 Handsom young Squars were Sent by a man to follow us, they Came up this evening and peresisted in their Civilities. [Camped about ten miles above the previous camp but on the opposite shore, Campbell County, South Dakota.]

<sup>51</sup> Perhaps another name for Pocasse, the second chief.

<sup>52</sup> Mandan Indians.

<sup>53</sup> Probably Clark's version of "simlin," a term for summer squashes.

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# “A PRAIRIE CHILDHOOD” BY EDITH ABBOTT

## AN EXCERPT FROM *THE CHILDREN’S CHAMPION*, A BIOGRAPHY OF GRACE ABBOTT

JOHN SORENSEN

Grace Abbott (1878-1939) is, perhaps, the greatest champion of children’s rights in American history. She was a woman of intriguing contradictions: a life-long Republican Party member and a life-long liberal activist; a native of the Nebraska frontier who spent much of her life in the poorest immigrant quarters of urban Chicago; an unmarried woman who was nicknamed “the mother of America’s forty-three million children.”

Grace Abbott was a public figure who was both much adored and bitterly, sometimes vehemently, attacked. She was a born and bred pioneer: the first woman nominated for a Presidential cabinet post (secretary of labor for

Herbert Hoover) and the first person sent to represent the U.S. at a committee of the League of Nations.

Grace Abbott’s courageous struggles—to protect the rights of immigrants, to increase the role of women in government, and to improve the lives of all children—are filled with adventurous tales of the remarkable human ability to seek out suffering, and to do something about it. She was a bold, defiant woman who changed our country more profoundly than have many Presidents.

U.S. Representative Edward Keating summed up the feelings of innumerable Americans when he stood on the floor of the Congress in 1939 and said, quite simply: “To me there was something about Grace Abbott which always suggested Joan of Arc.”

The impressive achievements of Grace Abbott’s adult life beg on the question: how did she come to be such an extraordinary woman? The answer is, perhaps, to be found in her unusual and beautiful experiences as a child on the Great Plains.

“A Prairie Childhood”—an excerpt from the forthcoming Grace Abbott biography entitled *The Children’s Champion*—tells the story

*John Sorensen compiled and edited this article. He is the Founding Director of the Abbott Sisters Project and has just completed The Children’s Champion, a radio biography of Grace Abbott, based upon the soon-to-be-published book of the same name. His next endeavor will be the production of a TV portrait of Grace Abbott.*



of Grace's childhood in the words of her beloved sister, Edith Abbott (1876-1957), who was a great pioneer of social work education. For more information on the lives and works of Grace and Edith Abbott, please contact the Abbott Sisters Research Center at the Edith Abbott Memorial Library in Grand Island, Nebraska.

## 1. CHILDREN OF THE WESTERN PLAINS

A child's voice was repeating, "reel lil' sister . . . reel lil' sister," as she tried to pull herself up the high steps of the black walnut stairway, one hand clutching her grandmother's and the other holding uncertainly to the banister.

"Yes, a real little sister—but very, very quiet." Grandmother led me from the chilly hallway into Mother's room, where a coal fire was burning in the little stove. There, in what had been my own wooden cradle, was the new baby, and I can hear now my excited child's voice calling Mother to come see "my lil' sister, reel lil' sister," until I was led away, back down the cold, steep stairs.

In the long years to come, Grace was to say many times, in her half-serious way, "You know, Edith really has a remarkable memory. She even recalls when I was born, and she was only two years old at that time!" But I really do remember it—to the very day and hour that I saw for the first time the little sister who would grow up and play with me.

Grace and I always agreed that our most cherished memories were those of our prairie childhood. They are long memories, going back many years. We were born in Grand Island, one of the oldest Nebraska towns, less than a mile from the Overland Trail. And even when we lived in Chicago or Washington, this western town and state were always home.

Children of the old frontier, we were brought up hearing the story of the making of a state in the prairie wilderness, and we knew the men and women who had cast in their lives and fortunes for the "winning of the

West"—facing the blizzards and droughts and other hardships of the covered-wagon days. Perhaps it was because we knew of the sacrifices made by the pioneers that we were always proud of having been born in Nebraska and always wanted to be identified with Nebraska.

Our prairie home was in a very small town in a county with a large area but with few settlers. People talked of the long future. Everyone seemed full of confidence. There was hope, vigorous planning, and profound belief in the kind of success that would be the result of hard work and rugged will.

The town site was still part of the prairie, and the town streets had the prairie look, with clumps of buffalo grass along the sides and even in the middle of the way. There were new people coming in all the time—some of whom would stay, while others pushed on farther west. No one ever seemed to go back.

In those days, the first question you asked anyone was, "Where did you come from?" And we children considered it quite a distinction to have been born in Nebraska. We were part of the town, the county, the state, and we enjoyed the sense of belonging.

To the young soldiers who, like Father, had come from President Lincoln's armies, the western plains had been the land of promise, and the westward journey a thrilling pilgrimage. Wherever they went, the historians tell us, those early settlers "made civilization"—even when there seemed little to make it with or from. And, when we were young, the spirit of the Great Adventure was still in the Nebraska air.

Trying to recover the memories of the prairie days, the pictures in my mind of my sister, Grace, and of my mother and father, are clear as I see again the old home with our two brothers, Othman and Arthur, our dear Quaker grandmother who lived with us—and the small town with its democratic way of frontier life.

Grace used to say that a small western town was the most honestly democratic place in the world. There were no people who were rich, and the poor we all knew as individuals. They



FIG. 1. *Grand Island in 1885 from the top of the Hall County Courthouse looking south.* Photograph by J. R. Moeller, 1885 Grand Island Souvenir Book, Courtesy of Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.

were people to whom we were expected to be especially polite and kind—people who had had one misfortune or another, people whom we should try to help.

## 2. FAMILY TRADITIONS

In the quiet life of an early western town, family stories and family traditions were important in the lives of children, and our parents' tales of their families seemed to belong to the history of the country and to be part of the great American traditions.

Two of Father's great-great-grandfathers had been in the Colonial Wars, and one of his grandfathers in the Revolutionary War. We knew the story of Mother's Quaker family, the Gardners—how her grandfather, John Gardner, had come to this country to be an aide-de-camp to his brother, an officer in Lord Cornwallis's army, and how, at the risk of being tried for treason, he had left the British army because he had become a "convinced Friend" and married a Quaker girl in the Genesee Valley in New York State.

When life seemed difficult, we heard stories of how much harder things had been when Father and Mother were children. Mother had been born and had spent her childhood in a log house in DeKalb County in Illinois. She

sometimes said, "How I liked our house. It was a very nice log house." And when Grace would ask, "But how could a log house be a nice house, Mother?" she would tell us about the big open fire and about the large room just for weaving.

Grandmother, with a brother and a sister, became a pioneer settler along the Kishwaukee River. In the days before bridges had been built across the larger rivers, our mother's father had drowned some months before she was born when he was trying to swim with his horse across the Kishwaukee during a season of high water, on his way to get supplies. He and his horse were both good swimmers, but the horse probably got his feet tangled in the water lilies, and they both went down. Grandmother never spoke of that tragedy, but Mother once told me the story as she had learned to know it.

The abolitionist traditions and the history of the anti-slavery movement were also a part of our life. There were endless stories about Lincoln and arguments about the campaigns of the Civil War, which Father always called the "War of the Rebellion."

Men who came to see Father had been, nearly all of them, Union soldiers, and if they stayed to have supper, they would sit through the long evening, telling stories of the men in

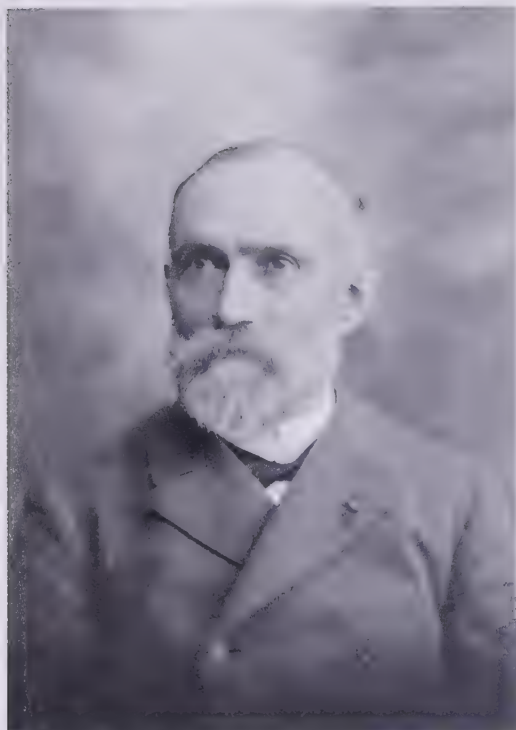


FIG. 2. O. A. Abbott, first Lieutenant Governor of the state of Nebraska. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

their regiments and of their officers. We children soon found that being interested in grown-up conversation meant an excuse for staying up later and sitting in the warm room downstairs a little longer.

We knew that Grandfather Abbott had been a "Black Republican" but not an abolitionist like the Gardners. He did not approve of the Underground Railroad with which Mother's Quaker family has been connected. Grace used to ask endless questions. "I don't understand just what this slavery was," she would say. "I don't see how it made a great war."

Father would tell us that he had heard the abolitionist Wendell Phillips, who had come to Illinois to speak in Belvidere, only ten miles from the Abbotts' family farm. At that time,

Father was still a schoolboy, but he walked the long distance to attend the meeting over roads so muddy with melting winter snows as to be almost impassable—making his way into the town by the slow process of moving from one rail fence to another. He was footsore the next day from the weary walk home that lasted well into the early morning hours. But Father said that it was easy to forget how tired he had been, and impossible to forget the wonderful experience of hearing that beautiful voice defending the abolitionist faith.

Father enlisted in September 1861, while he was still eighteen, after Lincoln's call for "three hundred thousand more" volunteers. But the war created a conflict for Mother's Quaker abolitionist family; they believed so earnestly in freeing the slaves that they could not accept the noncombatant position of the Friends. And so it was with great seriousness that the five Gardner sons of that generation all joined the armies of "Father Abraham"—four of them to die for what was, to them, a war to free the slaves. Mother's only brother was one of those who never came back, and his picture hung in both Mother's and Grandmother's rooms.

Mother often spoke about the fugitive slaves. She had gradually come to know that her mother, her aunt Lydia, and her uncle Allen Gardner were all working with the Underground Railroad. Mother had been cautioned as a child not to talk about the things that she saw at home. And even long years after the war, she still did not like to say much about the "Underground" attempts made to help the fugitive slaves escape.

For one thing, I do not believe that she knew a great deal about the things that happened. As a child she had wondered about the heavy "bakings," about a wagon dashing into the yard and the horses being watered. Then suddenly, all the bread and food would disappear, and the wagon would dash out again, leaving her mother and all the Gardners in some excitement, but with Mother knowing only that something had happened which she didn't understand.



She told us that, as they were taking out her mother's horses one day, lending them to relieve another team, she was playing alone in the yard and went to pick up a ball under what she thought was a stranger's hay wagon standing in the yard. As she crawled under the wagon, she looked up and, suddenly, through a crack, she saw two black faces looking down. She ran home frightened, saying that two Negro men were hiding under the hay. But she was told solemnly that she must never speak to anyone about what she had seen.

The Gardner and Griffen families suffered cruelly during the war. Mother's only brother was one of those who was wounded during Sherman's march to the sea. He was taken north on a hospital ship and died at sea, while his widowed mother was on her way to Baltimore, where she had been sent word that she would find him in a hospital.

In Father's regiment, the Ninth Illinois Cavalry, was one of Mother's cousins, Edwin Branch, who was killed at Pontotoc, Mississippi. Edwin Branch was one of the new men that Father had got when he was sent north to find recruits. The historian Dr. Jesse Hawes later wrote of Edwin Branch as being "ruddy and fresh from his northern home," when his head was "literally taken off by a cannon ball."

And then there was the story of Edwin's brother, Henry Branch, who was furloughed home from a Southern battlefield, but when he got off the train at Belvidere found no one there to meet him, since the family had not yet got his letter. When no lift came along, he began the long twelve-mile walk home, eventually sitting down under an elm tree to rest on the old state road. And there they later found him—dead, but smiling. Father was particularly sad about that story and would say, "How sorry I felt for Squire Branch when I heard about it." And Mother would answer, "I suppose Henry's heart was worn out, but at least he was happy, for he had come home."

Father's cavalry sabre hung on the wall with his army commission, and we used to ask him about it. Father was so tall and strong and vigorous that we thought him quite beautiful



FIG. 3. Elizabeth Griffen Abbott, on the occasion of her graduation from Rockford Female Seminary in 1868. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

with his wonderful dark eyes, and we loved to watch him as he told his stories. Grace said solemnly, "Father, did you ever kill a rebel soldier with your big sabre?" Father's reply was prompt and reassuring, "I hope not, my dear, I hope not. But the old sabre was very useful when we caught a chicken or a young pig."

### 3. OUR PRAIRIE HOME

Mother seemed to us a very beautiful person. She did not buy many new things to wear, but those she had were always, as Grace used to say, "different." A cream-colored silk with black plaid lines in it was trimmed with heavy black lace. I remember this dress of Mother's through all the years. She wore it with some

kind of a small black bonnet tied with a wide-ribboned bow on one side.

Mother and her family had been well to do and Mother had had a good salary when she worked as a teacher and principal back in Illinois. She had brought some handsome dresses out west with her, and her policy was to go on wearing nice things even when they were old and worn, instead of buying new and less distinctive things of cheaper quality. To us, Mother herself was "different."

Mother had a quiet dignity that, as Grace said, "just made you do things when you didn't want to at all." As we children were rather rough and tumble, and noisy and harum-scarum, Grace used to compare us with Mother and say, "But, Mother, how could you have such 'fighty' children? We just don't seem to be your kind."

How kind and friendly the old prairie home seemed with its gardens and walks and places for children to play, and with its porches at the front, the side, and the back of the house. The house had a south bay window that looked into green and growing things. We had an acre of ground for trees and shrubs and vegetable gardens and flowers.

One of the graveled walks that stretched along between the flowerbeds and the vegetable gardens was very wide, and Mother called it "the broad walk." Our broad walk had some large willows and wonderful cottonwood trees on each side. The cottonwoods grew rapidly in our dry country, and they gave the whole place a spacious air.

Here was the children's swing, where we had Father for a playmate in the long summer evenings when he would swing us to thrilling heights. "Hang tight now, Gracie, and away you go!" and away she went in her little pink chambray dress, higher and higher, holding fast to the ropes, with the prairie wind whispering through the rustling cottonwood leaves like a strange mysterious friend.

Even our games were in the proper tradition, and Grace would come up the broad walk, pushing her little red wagon and shouting, "Make way for the Overland Express. Make

way for the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express." Then, suddenly, she was the Pony Express, galloping along with bits of paper for letters, until our brother Arthur became an Indian in ambush to hold up the Overland Mail.

Mother thought the flat brown country of the Great Plains was a forlorn place for children. She liked to tell us stories about her old home in the beautiful Illinois country—stories of the woods and wildflowers, orchards, wild blackberries, hazelnut bushes, and butternut trees—and she used to call us "poor benighted prairie children." Grace always liked the stories Mother told of the Illinois woods—how she watched for the early arbutus, how she loved to find a jack-in-the-pulpit, while Grace asked, "But now, just what is this jack-in-the-pulpit? Couldn't we get just one jack-in-the-pulpit to plant so I could see one?"

Our house was a story and a half, painted a nice prairie brown. It had a hall and a stairway, beautifully curved, which, like everything else, was black walnut, with a good bannister to slide on.

The black walnut stairway in the hall led upstairs to a small hall and three bedrooms under the sloping roofs. These rooms were very hot in the summer, and Mother sometimes let us take a quilt out to sleep for a while on the roof of the front porch. There, in the quiet prairie night, we stayed to see the great stars overhead. "I can just feel the stars coming down around us," Grace used to say. We tried to find the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper—and when Father joined us, he could help us find other constellations.

Two of our favorite plants in the garden area were small oleander trees, one white and one pink. A great deal of care was taken in the fall when early frosts came suddenly, and the oleanders were watched by everyone and wrapped up at night in newspapers for fear the frost might hurt them. The oleanders were so slow about blossoming and so perfect when they did blossom, we were all triumphant when friends and neighbors came to see them, and

even the local newspaper took notice. Those blossoms were so often sent to sick friends and neighbors that they seemed to be dedicated for this mission.

Mother felt keenly the sorrows of the families whose children were ill, and she grieved for those who died. She was quick to take the cherished oleander blossoms here and there. One time she sent some to the home of a very poor neighbor who had lost her youngest child. The child's mother later told us that the lovely white blossoms were the only flowers she had to place in the hand of the dead child. That made a great impression on me as I stood listening while she and Mother both wept as she tried to talk.

Diphtheria and scarlet fever were dangerous epidemics in those days. A whole family of children whom we knew well were victims of a diphtheria outbreak, a tragedy that explained Grace's name.

Mother had been trying to decide whether Grace should be named Lydia Gardner, for the most beloved of her Quaker aunts, or Lucy Gardner for an older and dearly loved cousin. But the death of these three little friends made Mother decide to use the name Grace, which had been the name of the eldest little girl in the stricken family. This seemed a way of expressing our sorrow over the loss of our friends.

When Father's approval for the name was sought, he said gently, "Well, there was a Grace Abbott in our family in 1587 in England, so I think it is all right to have one here in 1878 in Nebraska."

#### 4. THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIAN

There were still a great many Indians in our part of the plains when we were children, and some of them were often seen coming and going through the town. It was part of Mother's Quaker heritage that she sympathized with the Indians, who had been disinherited by our government. She had earnest convictions about the injustices they had suffered, and she wanted to help them and to see them as they came and went. We tried to understand

Mother's stories, some of which had been part of her Illinois childhood, about how the Indians had followed "the sorrowful trail" and how every road they traveled had been a road of injustice.

As children we knew the Pawnee best, and Mother took a great interest in the stories about the Pawnee Tribe and the cruelties they had sometimes suffered from the Sioux Indians. The government used to allow them to leave the reservation for an annual hunting festival, and we knew the story about how the Pawnees went off on one of their old-time expeditions and came back to find the Sioux hidden everywhere in their village. The Sioux had used their time to prepare a deadly assault on the Pawnee as they returned from their festival.

It was after Mother came to Nebraska that the remnant of the Pawnee Tribe was moved from the Nance County reservation, north of our own county, to Indian Territory. Although the Pawnee submitted peaceably to the removal order, Mother thought that this moving of them from their good land—simply because of the railroads and those interested in making the state seem a little more "important"—was an injustice that took the Pawnee away from land that was rightfully theirs. For many years afterward, some of the Pawnee seemed always to be around to tell their story of the "Lost-Forever Land."

Mother also sympathized at times with the Sioux. In the late 1870s, difficulties with the Indians in the northern part of our state threatened to become serious. As we children grew up, we heard many stories from the army officers who stopped in Grand Island and who sometimes came to dinner with Father.

A favorite story was that of Chief Crazy Horse, the Ogallala Sioux Indian who made such a brave but hopeless fight for the freedom of his people. Crazy Horse was a great chief who would never register or enroll at any Indian agency, and there were many legends about him. The battle with General Custer at the Little Big Horn was often talked about, and we knew that Crazy Horse had called to the men of his tribe, "Strong hearts, brave



hearts, to the front. Weak hearts and cowards to the rear."

Because of the Indian reservations then in Nebraska, groups of Indians wrapped in blankets were seen on the streets of town from time to time. Grace and I usually walked boldly ahead, but almost instinctively each grabbed the other's hand as we passed the strange people with the strange language. "Do not be afraid," Mother used to say. "They will not harm you, and you should try to learn to believe in them."

When Mother would say, "Show them that you are not afraid of them," Grace would ask, "But, Mother, how can we do that when we know we are afraid of some of them?" This called for a long explanation and usually ended with the familiar statement that "an Indian never forgets a kindness. If you are truly kind to them, they will be kind to you and to all the other children."

The names of some of the old Indian chiefs who had hunted buffalo, antelope, and wild geese on our part of the plains were often repeated by children. "Morning Star" was a name Grace always liked—and she even wrote a story about an Indian princess with that name. "If I were an Indian, I would like to be called 'Morning Star,'" she often said, waving her hand high toward the clouds.

We also listened eagerly to the story of Prairie Flower, the daughter of a Sioux chief, who died after a "long and cruel winter" that had followed a period of drought and other hardships, when the wild deer were gone and the Indians were hungry. "I suppose Prairie Flower was a princess," Grace would say, "but she was sick and hungry just the same."

## 5. THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Grace used to say that she was born believing in women's rights, and certainly, from the earliest days, women's suffrage was part of our childhood. "I was always a suffragist, and even if you are little girls, you can be suffragists, too, because it is right and just," was the teaching in our home.

Mother would tell us about the time when her uncle Allen Gardner came back from a visit to the old New York home in the Genesee Valley. Mother was then only a child of eight, but she remembered her joy when Uncle Allen, who had brought some precious abolitionist papers for her mother, said that he also had a present for her. And what a present for an eight-year-old! He had brought a copy of the then-recent speech made by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the Seneca Falls Convention, and this, he said, was for little Elizabeth—but she must learn the speech as soon as she was able to read it.

A child in a log house did not have many presents in those early days, and Mother told of her excitement and of how she struggled to read and then to recite that memorable address. Whether she learned it then or later, I do not know. I only know that some parts of it were learned so well that they were never forgotten.

Mother, who was a fatherless child, had been brought up by her widowed mother and an aunt, but she always said that her good Uncle Allen had done a great deal for her. All the Gardners were "birthright Quakers," and they believed earnestly in the great crusade for women's rights, which was still in the early stages of organization when Mother was a child in the 1840s and '50s.

When Mother was a student at Rockford College in the 1860s—just a few years before Jane Addams attended the school—she was a sturdy advocate of women's suffrage, and the subject of her graduating essay was "Iconoclasts." I am sure that women's rights was one of the subjects discussed. Certainly Mother brought with her, when she came to our part of the pioneer West, all the arguments of that day for women's suffrage.

Grace and I both treasured the copy of John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women*, which Father had given to Mother before they were married—and which had marginal notes apparently written by one to the other. It was clear from his notes that Father had been converted to a vigorous belief in the rights of

women a long time before our memories began.

Father and Mother were both helpful when the legislature of Nebraska in 1882 finally submitted to the voters an amendment to the state constitution that would give women a right to vote for state officers. Mother became one of the workers of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Society and the president of our local branch of the organization, and Father and Mother both worked hard in the local town and county campaign.

Miss Susan B. Anthony traveled out to Nebraska that year, and Father and Mother were happy that she had promised to come to our part of the state. She stayed at our house and spoke at a large public meeting in Grand Island. Apparently they had a splendid meeting for her, for we heard many times that Miss Anthony had been pleased with it.

We remembered even better Mother's story about how tired Miss Anthony was after she had shaken hands with the last person in the audience who lingered to meet her. As they walked slowly away from the old Liederkranz hall, where the meeting had been held, Mother said that it must be hard to shake hands with so many people after so many meetings. But Miss Anthony quickly put her arm around Mother and said, very earnestly, "Oh, my dear, if you could only know how much easier it is than in the days when no one wanted to shake hands with me!"

We had no room for guests in our house since my grandmother had come to live with us, so it often fell to my lot or to Grace's to share not only a room, but a bed with one of Mother's suffragist visitors. We enjoyed having visitors and felt very important when we were told that we were helping the cause. I was proud that I shared my pillow with Miss Anthony the night she spoke at our local meeting when I was only six years old, and I never quite understood why Mother said, "Poor Miss Anthony—that was the best we could do for her."

The suffrage amendment of 1882 was defeated in spite of the hard work of the Ne-

braska women. But when the vote was over, there was a balance in campaign money that was large enough to be really useful to a small western town.

Mother thought that, instead of going on, the suffrage organization should disband until some new hope of legislative action appeared. Her argument was that the women should show that they were public-spirited even when they were defeated and start a town library. Mother was interested in reading, and she argued vigorously about the need for books for everyone. Soon her proposal was adopted and the new public library was created, while the women waited for another opportunity to begin their suffrage work.

When Grace was in high school she was a wonderful debater, and she loved to be on the affirmative of resolutions about granting suffrage to women. "Grace is such a grand fighter," our younger brother, Arthur, said with pride after one of these debates.

Many years later, when Grace and I were living at Hull House in 1912, Grace came home one day laughing about a fashionable lady who was interested in civic reforms. "Now tell me about this woman suffrage," she said to Grace. "Do you think it's going to amount to anything? Because, if it is, I'd like to be in at the beginning as one of the pioneers, you know." Grace said, "I told her that if she wanted to be one of the pioneers, she was about sixty-five years too late."

## 6. A HOME OF LAW AND POLITICS

Father loved the law. He enjoyed the give and take of the trial, and he liked to tell Mother about this or that legal controversy or about how the evidence had been so well presented that a doubtful case had been won. He was always so happy when he won a hotly contested case.

He had begun to study law while he was still in the army. When his regiment was stationed at Selma, Alabama, after the South's surrender at Appomattox, he was in charge of the Freedman's Bureau there for some months.

He had bought a copy of Blackstone and had made up his mind to prepare for a career in the law. He "read law" for the next two years in Belvidere before he started west in 1867.

We all knew the story of how Father had built his first law office in Grand Island out of green cottonwood logs. The little one-room office had a pine floor and a roof of pine shingles, but it was not plastered and was far from weatherproof. When Grace asked, "But how could you lift those big logs and do all that just by yourself?" he would explain, "Well, I got a friend to help when I needed a little help, but I didn't need much." We all pointed with some pride to the plain little building, later used for a prairie family's dwelling house, as Father's first law office.

Father used to live and work in that office. The cot that he had brought out in the covered wagon was a kind of sofa in the daytime and a bed at night. When the wind blew the rain in from one side of the little log building as he tried to sleep, the bed was moved over to the other side until the wind changed.

Father was his own janitor, of course, and the little stove that he had in his office must have been a poor kind of protection against the icy winds that swept over the prairies in the winter. But he enjoyed everything in those days, and he used to say that his imagination had been fired by the vast expanse of the surrounding prairie country. Father often told us of the beautiful antelope that grazed nearby and the wonderful outlook over the plains when he stood at his door.

Father was the first lawyer in our part of the state and the only lawyer in our county in the early years. He drew up the first charter for the city of Grand Island, and he greatly enjoyed his work as a member of two early constitutional conventions for the new state.

From the beginning, Father enjoyed politics. Like most of the Grand Army veterans, he was a staunch Republican. He worked very hard in his law office, and he greatly enjoyed being in the State Senate and, especially, being the state's first Lieutenant Governor, as well as the President of the Nebraska Senate.

He was quite disappointed when he later ran for the State Senate and was defeated. He had hoped that he might be on the Supreme Court bench, but that meant a political fight. He tried once for the nomination but was not successful.

And there were other disappointments. Mother would say that, of course, the fact that Father was not a church member always hurt—but she thought we should just accept this as the price we paid for holding fast to the opinions we thought were right. Father and Mother did not go to church, and Father had never joined one. "If that is necessary in order to be successful in politics, then I will not be successful."

Father went down to his office regularly on Sunday and would sometimes enjoy the reproving glances of the churchgoers. "I hope they got as much out of listening to Reverend So-and-So as I did out of that brief I was studying this morning," he would say. "I believe in doing what I think is right, and not what they think is right. I let them think as they want to think, but I don't want them to tell me what I ought to do or what I ought to think."

Mother would say, "Perhaps it would be better if you worked here in the garden Sundays instead of offending the neighbors."

"I'm not offending them; they are offending me. Let's forget it and go on our way," he said.

The practice of a prairie lawyer was largely in the field of land law and was connected with the work of the United States Land Office, which the early settlers had been successful in bringing to Grand Island in 1869. The Land Office was an important business center in those days when homestead and pre-emption rights, timber claims, and other land cases were the most important topics of conversation.

There were cases concerning the early German settlers who had claims under the old pre-emption laws, and there were always contests developing between the squatter and the homesteader. These were all tried before the register and receiver of the Land Office. I be-



lieve the register decided them, but there were frequent appeals to the U.S. Commissioner in Washington. Father would often talk about "sending a brief into Washington," and I tried hard to understand what this strange thing that was called a "brief" really looked like and why Father was working on it so often. If she couldn't see Father's brief, Grace was sure to ask about it, and, being older, I wanted to be able to explain how it looked and where it was kept.

Father's clients brought us many treasures in return for homestead rights that were threatened and then finally saved. A beautifully dressed turkey was not infrequently sent to Mother by a grateful client, but most exciting of all were the rare occasions when a good client brought a little dressed pig ready to roast.

Drought was part of life in the corn country—something inevitable, inescapable. But we learned quickly that some droughts were worse than others, and we tried to understand what was meant by "cycles." When the grim decade of the nineties came, we discovered that everyone in the land of the cornstalk shared the misfortunes of the drought-stricken farmers. Financial collapse, which carried everyone to disaster, went with the farmer's despair over the struggle he seemed to be losing.

One evening, in the midst of a very bad drought, a vigorous and desperate woman came to our home in the early twilight when we were having our supper in the old bay-windowed dining room. She had had a long and dusty journey, with lifts along the way given by farmers whose sympathy never failed when a man or woman was facing foreclosure proceedings. She had finally reached her objective—her "only hope" as she said—the lawyer who, everyone told her, knew how to save a man's land.

She began by telling of her family's hard struggle to assemble the meager farm equipment, of the long years of work that went into the turning of the prairie sod into corn and wheat fields, of the series of good crops that had encouraged her husband to mortgage the farm—against the wife's advice and judgment.

Then followed the familiar story of an autumn without rains, the dry winter with almost no snow, a spring without enough rain, the loss of the winter wheat, the long hot summer, a dust storm, the loss of the corn crop, the loss of the small garden—"Don't ask me what we eat, we just don't eat." This was a story often heard in the early prairie days.

There was courage in the weather-beaten face of this typical homestead wife. She didn't mind pinching and scraping, she didn't mind going barefoot, she didn't mind anything except the stark reality of foreclosure and the fearful disaster of homelessness.

Her defiant challenge was the tradition of the country. "I don't mind working and getting nothing, but I'll never give up, and I'm not going to be druv out!" That expression we children appropriated as one of the slogans of our play: "I won't give up and I won't be druv out!" Grace, in later years, used to say that the relief administrators in Washington who talked so lightly about moving people from what the relief people called "submarginal lands" would find it very hard to deal with this tradition—and impossible to change it.

The county courthouse was, I guess you might say, our substitute for the modern movie. When we were quite young, we hung over the balcony in the courtroom during the political conventions and felt very important when we were able to contribute some genuine political stories to the dinner table conversation. "I stayed to hear William Jennings Bryan," Grace would report, "and you may not like what he says, Father, but I can tell you that he is a wonderful orator. Everyone in the convention stood and cheered him after his speech, and I wanted to cheer him, too," she would add defiantly.

"Stuff and nonsense, Gracie," Father would say. "You have too much sense to be taken in by a windbag." But Grace would stand her ground and argue, even when she was little and even when it annoyed Father.

Occasionally we enjoyed the tense excitement of some of the important cases that were tried in the district court. We knew how happy

Father was when he was winning a case, and we watched him with admiration and waited for his triumphant, challenging questions. Father used to encourage us to come when there was some part of a case he thought we might understand, especially a part with grand oratorical flourishes. "You can hear Henry D. Estabrook today," he would say of a great lawyer whom we admired and who came out from Omaha and sometimes stayed in our home. "Come in about eleven," Father would say, "and he'll be telling the jury what he thinks of your father."

Father was never too busy to look up and wave to us in the courtroom gallery, and some of the other lawyers would wave, too, or even come up to speak to the little Abbott girls. It was an exciting world, and Grace was sure she wanted to be a lawyer.

Ours was a "Republican town" in a Republican state, and one of the few Democrats we knew was a man of whom Father used to say, "Of course he's a Democrat." It sounded heinous, and yet he seemed such a nice, harmless man.

But that was Father—independent and outspoken. Once, some of the sons of the German immigrants in town were notified by the old imperial German government to report back to Germany for military service. I remember Father patiently explaining to the families that they were American citizens now, subject in no way to the old empire. But the families were frightened all the same. Father reassured them by swearing quite picturesquely about the German army and ended by saying, "Don't worry about the boy. Just bring me any notices you get from Germany, and I'll take care of them." Father seemed to have the final word about any injustice, and as children we thought he knew what ought to be done about everything—even the German Empire.

## 7. RESTLESS GRACE

We had none of the gadgets of modern childhood in our prairie home. Playthings—toys of any kind—were scarce. But we had a

cherished family horse called "Old Kit" and a low, wide phaeton, which was always called "the carriage" and which held a great many of us when necessary.

There was always variety with Grace as a companion. Her resources were endless—and always unexpected. Although she was not able to run faster or farther than my brothers, still she often challenged them so vigorously that she made us all expect to see her come out first. She knew how to find the thickest cat-tails and the longest bulrushes in the old prairie slough. She knew where the violets were earliest and largest in the spring, where the prairie flowers could be found among the endless monotony of the buffalo grass in the summer, and where the wild grapes grew in a hidden thicket near the river.

She was more amusing than the rest of us, full of undreamed-of possibilities and wonderful stories. She could ride or drive the fastest horse, could think of the strangest places to go, could meet with the most unforeseen adventures, and then come home safe with a completely disarming account of her wandering beyond bounds.

In Grand Island there was a two-story brick school building with a wonderful little tower where the janitor's bell rang for each school session, morning and afternoon. Children were supposed to go to school when they were five, but Grace was eager for the adventure of going to school, and she was full of reasons why she should go before she was five. One day, when the new term was beginning, my teacher said "little Grace" was to come on her special invitation. Grace was not quite four when she first appeared in school, but she was eager to do everything and was trying to be very proper about it all.

That day the children went to the blackboards to write the alphabet, letter by letter. But Grace knew only the letter "A," so she covered the board in her vicinity with all kinds of A's until the teacher came by and erased them and put down a "B." "There, Gracie," she said, "now you can make B's." Grace, however, knew her limitations, and making a new



FIG. 4. Edith Abbott, about age 5 or 6. Courtesy of Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.



FIG. 5. Grace Abbott, about age 3 or 4. Courtesy of Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.

letter suddenly and in public on a strange blackboard was too much for her. So she just went on with a new series of A's until the teacher returned with new instructions about making B's.

Grace only said, "But I can't make B's. I can't make B's." The other children by that time were interested, and Grace dashed from the room to come home and tell Mother her story. "I can't make B's and I can't make B's."

When I came home, I was eager to show my wisdom by teaching Grace to make B's, but she didn't want to hear anything more about it. I was so determined and persistent that Grace raised one hand and struck me as she pushed me out of the way. Then Mother came in and asked, "Grace, did you strike your sister?"

Her only reply was, "I can't make B's and I don't want her to teach me."

Mother took Grace's offending hand and said, "Now, Gracie, you can never say, 'This little hand never struck my sister.'"

Grace was not impressed. She quickly held up the other hand, saying, "No. But I can say this little hand didn't strike my sister." And Mother said no more.

By suppertime everyone wanted to show Grace how to make B's. Even the German maid whispered, "Gracie, you come to the kitchen. I show you how to make B." All that week Grace refused to learn, but by the next Monday she considered her situation seriously.

Our older brother, Ottie, warned her, "If you can't make B's you will never, never be able to read or write."

Grace had been given a new slate bound in red felt not long before. And so she took it with her to the supper table that night. Later, while the rest of us were out playing croquet,



Grace sat alone at the table, struggling over her slate. Finally, she came out to the yard with a large and varied collection of B's and the story that now she could learn to read and write. For long years afterward, all of Grace's difficulties were called "learning to make B's."

From the start, the children at the school followed Grace as a leader—whether it was playing a new "Jew's harp," or using a lariat like a cowboy, or telling them about a new song, like the "Animal Fair":

I went to the Animal Fair.  
The birds and the beasts were there,  
And the old raccoon  
By the light of the moon  
Was combing his auburn hair.

Other children seemed to be just naturally interested in what Grace was going to do next. She was always unexpected, and could think of new and amusing games, and always had things to do. She was different, and her teachers were a little bewildered by her sudden remarks that led to excitement.

Our report cards were carefully considered at home as to only one thing: deportment. I do not remember discussions about our grades, but Father had a standing offer of a silver dollar for any child who got 100 in deportment. Grace was forever in trouble at school because of her talking during class or other indiscretions, and she used to say, "Well, I guess I'll never get that silver dollar, Father, and I might as well grin and bear it."

In those days, our teachers were hard put to find ways to keep an active child busy. The child who got his work done first used to be given the task of watering the plants, cleaning the erasers, or cleaning the blackboards. A teacher's inquiry, "Now, children, do you all understand this?" would bring a reply from Grace, "No, I'm sorry, but I don't really understand it, and I asked Father, and I don't think he understands it either." And then it seemed as if none of the children understood.

One of her teachers was Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of a law partner of Father's. Mrs. Caldwell's

"Now, Grace . . ." was known through the town. Grace was perhaps seven years old at that time. "She has so much energy," Mrs. Caldwell complained to Mother. "I can't find enough things for her to do. I've had her water the plants until they've drowned."

"Grace, I don't know what to do with you. I'll have to talk to your mother," one teacher said after Grace's remarks had got the children laughing.

"But Mother doesn't know what to do with me either," was Grace's reply. "And sometimes I don't know what to do with myself."

## 8. GRACE AND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

In the days when we were children, everyone wore homespun clothing except Father, who was properly tailored in the long "Prince Alberts" that he liked to wear. Mother's dresses always seemed to us very elegant when she wore them, but they were made over for me and then made over again for Grace, who forever longed for "something really new—because I'm so tired of Mother's or Edith's old things."

Grace wanted bright dresses, and Mother's were usually dark brown or gray, and mine were blue. "Why can't I have one, just one red dress?" was the defiant question that inevitably led to an annual debate, for Mother did not approve of red. It was "too conspicuous, not nice and ladylike." But Grace's loud and frequent protests—and her wish for something bright and nice and new—meant that she usually got a pink chambray or a plum-colored wool dress. "But never, never the nice bright red dress I want," she would mourn.

A disheveled sewing lady used to make our dresses and our too-elaborate undergarments. She was an amusing woman, and when Mother pointed out something that was not right, she would say, "Oh, yes, Mrs. Abbott, that can be easily remedied." Grace enjoyed the idea that things could be easily remedied and was always quoting this remark when Mother didn't like something.

"Yes, Mother dear," Grace would say when she was late for school, "but that can be easily remedied." And off she went on a run.

Through the long winters we wore heavy, old-fashioned flannel underwear, and Grace was usually rebellious about it. Later, with summer, came the days of white dresses—very much starched—and little starched sunbonnets, and multitudinous varieties of starched underwear for little girls. How vehemently Grace disliked the starched sunbonnets! "Grandmother," she would say belligerently, "you want me to wear flannels in winter and sunbonnets in summer, and I don't like any of them."

Grandmother would say, "Grace, thee is a little rebel," when Grace pushed back the sunbonnet, neatly tied in a bow under her chin, and pulled at the knot until it was loosened. Grandmother's prophecy, "Thee will be as brown as a little Indian," held no terror for Grace.

"I'd like to be as brown as a little Indian, and I don't like to wear a sunbonnet," was her vigorous reply. Her dislike of sunbonnets was only equaled by her dislike of starched dresses.

"Oh, Grace, if thee would only take care of this clean dress!" was Grandmother's plaintive wish.

"But, Grandmother, if I do anything, my dress won't stay clean. I don't like dresses that are stiff, and you want me to wear what I like, don't you?"

"I want thee to look like a proper child."

"But, Grandmother, I don't want to be a proper child; I want to do things!"

In later years, when she became such a vigorous champion of the rights of children, I used to say, "Grace, you always resisted the iniquities visited upon children. I can still hear you talking to Grandmother about the red flannels and saying, 'I won't, I won't!'" Grace replied thoughtfully that her resistance had not been very successful at any time in her life.

My older brother, Ottie, who was quite handsome and clever, was sometimes extremely bossy with us younger children, so we had a way of ganging up, partly in self-defense,

and Grace was the most articulate defender. "Grace is the only one that has any 'spunk,'" my indignant grandmother would say. When I wept because my elder brother had taken one of my few treasures, Grandmother was scornful. "Grace doesn't let him do that to her. What is thee afraid of? Little Grace knows how to fight for her rights."

Grandmother would counsel Grace, "Now, that's right, Gracie. Never give up when thee know thee's right. Don't let anyone tell thee what thee must do. Do what thee thinks is right."

"But, Grandmother, how can thee tell what is right?" And this often proved to be a baffling question. "Yes, Grandmother," Grace would say. "I know what I want to do, but I don't know what is right to do always." Grace liked her independence, even when it was a child's independence, but she had misgivings when she was told she was the one who was right.

## 9. THE TREELESS PLAINS

When Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of the vast prairie country of early Nebraska, he described it as "an empty sky" with but one railroad stretching across it, "like a cue across a billiard table." But it was not an empty earth to those of us who were children there and loved both earth and sky—"Dust of the stars was under our feet / Glitter of stars above. . . ."

The old geographies that Mother and Father brought west—and the early maps that we poured over with such interest—marked the state in which we were born as part of the "Great American Desert." And this much-resented term was often spoken of by our elders to show that the impossible was, after all, possible, and that if a man had the westerner's capacity for hard work, he could turn an American desert into a good farming state.

The farmer needed courage to face the long, dry heat that destroyed his crops, the winter blizzards that killed his cattle, and the prairie fires that threatened his home. The courage to work together and wrestle with the

mysterious forces of nature was a cardinal virtue, and we children were taught to believe not so much in rugged individualism as in a kind of rugged cooperation.

Life was a struggle with invisible forces, and the specter of drought was an ever-present fear. In the summer there was also the fear of a tornado or a hailstorm that stripped the waving corn as it was ripening for harvest. I remember being taken in the old family carriage with my father when he went out after a bad hailstorm to see some great cornfields now cut to ribbons—fields that belonged to clients who would not be able to pay the interest on the mortgage. Father's gravity as he walked around to look at the scars of the hailstorm told of other disasters to come.

Father wanted us children to understand that we were not far away from pioneer days, perhaps because he wanted us to have the pioneer spirit that made light of difficulties. And we liked to think of our vast prairie country as it had been just before Father came there—without railroads or towns or farms, with Indians in tents and the herds of buffalo and other wild animals still present. The pioneers were new, but the prairies had been there forever. The first settlers had come to our part of the plains fewer than fifty years before we were born, and Father had been there for half that time. But even in this short time, we knew the old trails were already marked by the graves of the men and women who had died on the long journey.

Still, there was something beautiful about the prairie country in August, when the stubble fields made everything golden under the bright sun, and the smell of bonfires and burning prairie told us that autumn was on the way. The great treeless areas were broken here and there by "a blessed line of trees" that marked some prairie creek or one of the branches of the great Platte River—or perhaps only represented some homesteader's brave attempt to get a little shade near his house.

One of my earliest recollections is the fearful and wonderful spectacle of a great prairie fire. In our old home we often crawled out on

the roof of the front porch, where we sat in the long twilight, watching the straggling lines of fire on the prairie creeping along the distant horizon—first on one side and then on the other.

The roof of the front porch was a place of refuge in the hot summer evenings when everything was quiet and breathless, but there was one drawback to the porch roof—we were afraid that Grace would fall off in her excitement. She always wanted to see a hummingbird moth, and she knew that one was supposed to appear at dusk around the honeysuckle vines on the porch. So arguments went on: "But, Grandmother, I'm not near the edge, and I'm only leaning over a little to see that hummingbird moth."

"And what good will it do thee to see the hummingbird moth and fall off the porch?" was the reply.

The worst prairie fires came in the early fall. August is a very hot and dry month in Nebraska. As the days of intense heat turned the buffalo grass to brown crisp—and the plains turned into a vast stretch of dry grassland—a prairie fire, once started, was driven by the fierce winds and soon became a line of high, dangerous, and ever-spreading flames. People were always afraid that our little town would be caught in one of these wild conflagrations. We had seen the fire guards or fire breaks around the prairie homes—the narrow, ploughed strips forming the boundary of a great square with the house and barn in the center—given the protection of a belt of earth with no grass on it to burn. These fireguards reminded us that the danger was always present.

Watching the fires was a common evening occupation when we could get up and look out over the prairie. That fire, burning along the horizon to the southwest—how did it start? Or that high line of flames straight ahead to the west—where would it end? Was the railroad responsible for spreading flames that destroyed the homes and the hard-won success of the pioneers? Would the fire destroy our town and our home—and what would become





FIG. 6. Edith Abbott, 14 years old, 1891. Courtesy of Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.



FIG. 7. Grace Abbott, 17 years old, 1896. Courtesy of Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.

of us all? And old Kit, our horse? And the cow and the dog and the cat?

Father had told us of the great fire that had burned all the western prairie and a large part of the original town down to within a short distance of our home in that mythical period before he had persuaded Mother to come to Nebraska, and before there were any children in the home. We had heard the stories of the wild struggle to save the early settlement and we wondered, Was such a calamity coming again?

## 10. THE END OF THE BEGINNING

New responsibilities and heavy anxieties came in the early part of the 1890s and generally brought our carefree childhood days to an end. The first shadows fell after I had gone to boarding school. Mother thought that Grace and I should have more educational opportunities than the schools in our small town of-

fered. She considered sending us to her old school, Rockford College, which still had a preparatory department, but Rockford, Illinois, was too far from the central Nebraska of those days.

Grandmother's death, after a long illness, left us without her wisdom and counsel, but Mother finally decided that I was to go alone to Brownell Hall, an Episcopalian diocesan school in Omaha, and that Grace was to go two years later.

In September of 1889, when I was nearly thirteen, I was sent away—a sharp breaking of home ties for Mother, for Grace, and for my brothers, as well as for me. I should not like to relive any period as completely unhappy as the first lonely months at boarding school.

Because of hard times at home, it soon became difficult for Father to pay the school bills—even for only one daughter—and Grace never joined me as Mother had planned. Furthermore, Father and Mother had taken on

additional responsibilities when they brought into the family two young cousins after the death of Father's younger sister in California. It was more difficult to provide for six children than it had been to care for four, and the hard times soon became a hard reality, as the cruel decade of the 1890s brought despair to Nebraska.

I was graduated from boarding school in the summer of 1893. In spite of the troubles at home, Mother carefully worked out an inexpensive plan for Grace and me to visit the great World's Fair in Chicago. As a Burlington attorney, Father was able to get us a railroad pass without fee to Chicago, and Mother arranged for us to board with people she knew there, and so Grace and I embarked on our slender resources for Chicago. Whether the trip was worth what it cost Mother in saving and planning in those hard times, I do not know, but it was almost our last carefree outing for a long period of years to come.

After I came back from our trip to Chicago, I wanted to teach, since that seemed to be the only way for me to earn money that the family desperately needed. Although I was not quite seventeen, I got a position as a substitute teacher in the Grand Island city schools at a salary of \$15 a month. On the first day of school, it happened that they needed a substitute in the high school, and so I was sent there unexpectedly. There I stayed as a full-time teacher with an assortment of classes in algebra, geometry, English, history, and Latin. It was hard work, but I knew that any income was important, and I was determined not to give up.

Grace was then in the high school and in my classes, and she was wonderful about helping me. We went to school together each morning and came home together each night—and although a good many of the boys and girls in my classes were older than I was, I think they knew that the Abbotts had had a

bad time financially, and they were patient with me. And, perhaps, having Grace there to defend me helped to keep their attention, too.

The hot summer of 1894 meant that the drought was not broken, and the hard times got harder. Many homesteaders lost their farms under mortgage foreclosures, and they could be seen driving east in covered wagons full of furniture and children. They took their defeat with grim humor. Some of them had signs painted on the wagon saying, "Back East to visit the wife's relations," or "Next year back to begin again."

After her high school graduation, Grace took a degree from a local Baptist college and then went to teach in a high school in Broken Bow, Nebraska, when she was still only eighteen. In the winter of her first year there, she became ill with a bad case of typhoid fever. Father and Mother went to visit her and were shocked to find Grace in a ramshackle improvised hospital in Broken Bow. They brought her back home in spite of the great risk of moving her.

By fall Grace seemed well enough to work again, but we all agreed that she should not leave home so soon. Finally, I used my very small savings and borrowed some money from a local bank so that I might go to the state university in Lincoln, and Grace took over my place teaching in the Grand Island high school.

Grace immediately became enthusiastic about her work there, and she was quick to organize and coach debating teams and basketball teams. For the next ten years she would stay on in these positions, enjoying her work in our little hometown but also, I believe, trying to understand what she must do next. There was too much of the pioneer in Grace's blood for her to be able to stay at home forever.

— End of Part I —

# COME TO THE “CHAMPAGNE AIR” CHANGING PROMOTIONAL IMAGES OF THE KANSAS CLIMATE, 1854-1900

KAREN DE BRES

Euro-American settlers poured into Kansas during the second half of the nineteenth century, and there they encountered a hostile and unpredictable climate. Rainfall patterns were erratic, and the extremes of temperature were both demanding and daunting. Countering these conditions, or at least tempering them, became a task for a variety of individuals and organizations. The work was straightforward: to transform the image of Kansas in order to attract prospective immigrants. As historian Carl Becker wrote, this was not easy:

Until 1895 the whole history of the state was a series of disasters, and always something new, extreme, bizarre, until the name Kansas became a byword, a synonym, for the impossible and the ridiculous, inviting laughter, furnishing occasion for jest and hilarity. “In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted” became a favorite motto of immigrants worn out with the struggle, returning to more hospitable climes; and for many years it expressed well enough the popular opinion of that fated land.<sup>1</sup>

KEY WORDS: climate, immigration, Kansas, perception, railroads

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Many of the problems that beset nineteenth-century Kansans were common to settlers across the Great Plains. Not surprisingly, some of the solutions proposed to deal with the problems were common across the Plains as well, and readers may find echoes of their own states' experiences in those of Kansas.

Kansas, like other states, was eager for new settlers. Attracting them hinged on overcoming the many reports of adverse conditions that filtered out from the state. Promotional materials, which portrayed the Kansas climate, resources, and landscape in optimistic tones, were a common medium used to smooth the



rough edges of the physical environment. In this essay I examine such promotional literature, evaluate the strategies pursued by the "climatic spin doctors" of the time, and discuss the continuous refashioning of the Kansas climatic image during a complex social and environmental history. Books, pamphlets, and folders from 1854 to 1900 were selected for examination from the extensive collection of the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka. These materials are representative of the Plains and particularly of Kansas promotional literature as a whole.

The essay is divided into three sections. The first describes the Kansas climate, provides an overview of the more popular of the nineteenth-century climate-change theories, and reviews nineteenth-century Kansas settlement. The second section presents accounts of the Kansas climate from the promotional literature and describes the different approaches used to make Kansas's climate attractive. The third section analyzes three general stages in the promotional literature and explains the ways in which the Kansas climate were discussed in each. The counties of Riley, Dickinson, Ellis, and Gray, and their county seats of Manhattan, Abilene, Hays, and Cimarron, were chosen as the focus of this essay because they represent different periods of initial settlement, different forms of the Kansas economy, and different physical environments.

#### KANSAS CLIMATE, CLIMATE THEORIES, AND FRONTIER SETTLEMENT

Kansas, in the center of the contiguous forty-eight states, is located 37 to 40 degrees north of the equator and between 95 and 102 degrees west longitude. Throughout its 400 miles of east-west extent, Kansas changes from the moderate elevations and humid conditions of the lower Missouri Basin in the east to the High Plains in the west adjacent to the eastern slope of the Rockies.<sup>2</sup> Its continental climate means that it is subject to extremes of

temperature. Moisture comes often from the surface winds blowing from the Gulf of Mexico, and rainfall averages between forty inches per annum in the east to about fifteen inches in the southwest (Fig. 1). The Great Plains is characterized by a wide range of weather conditions that result from the distance of the Plains from the moderating effect of any major body of water and from the presence of the different air masses that frequently alternate in their dominance of the region.<sup>3</sup>

When Kansas became a territory in 1854 it did so under the requirements of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Both territories were to be admitted to the Union as either free or slave-owning states, depending upon the vote of their citizens. Because of this condition, various immigration societies were established to promote Kansas settlement as a moral imperative. When Kansas achieved statehood in 1861, thirty-four of the current 105 counties were organized, including Riley and Dickinson Counties. Between 1861 and 1874 another thirty-five counties were added, including Ellis. The most westward arc of counties was organized in the 1880s and 1890s, including Gray County. Settlers could obtain land through the Preemption Act of 1841, the Homestead Act of 1862, the Timber Culture Act, and from the Office of Indian Affairs, from individuals, and from the railroads, which had been granted land along their rights-of-way by the federal government.

Between 1854 and 1900 seasonal temperatures and precipitation totals in Kansas were quite varied. One of worst droughts in Kansas history began in 1859 and lasted until 1868 in the settled parts of the state. "Droughty Kansas" became a common expression, and this phrase was of such importance that a Kansas artist, Henry Worrall, drew a charcoal sketch by that name to refute it, showing plump Kansas farmers harvesting gigantic vegetables with a rainstorm in the background (Fig. 2). Worrall's illustration carried a clear ideological message and later appeared on the cover of the *Kansas Farmer*, a journal financed by the

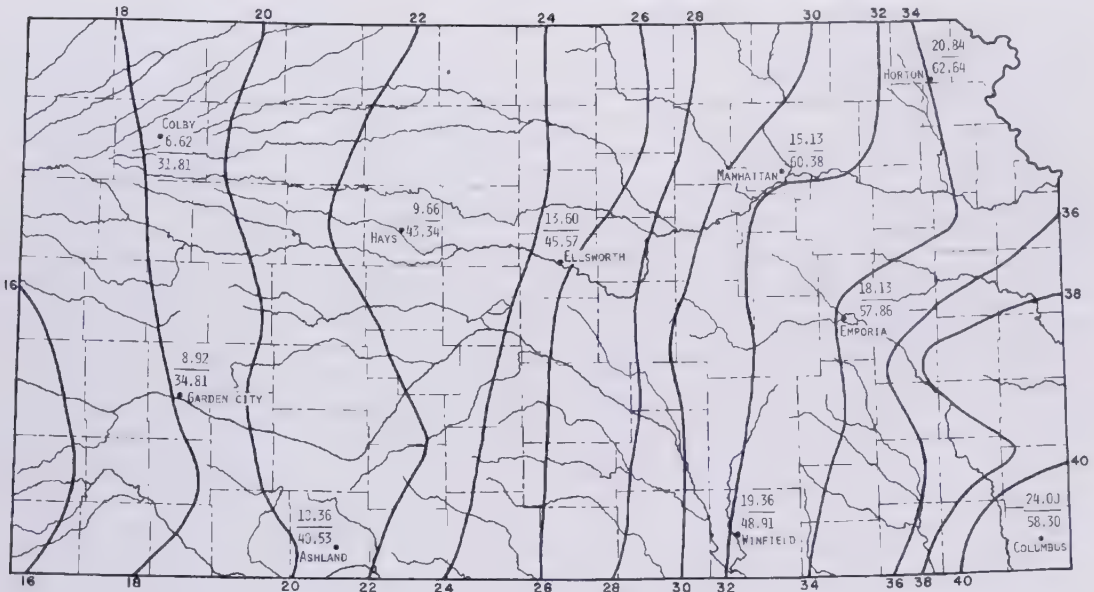


FIG. 1. Precipitation patterns in Kansas, 1995. Source: Goodin, Mitchell, Knapp, Bivens (1995).

state legislature. It is but one early example of the combative nature often displayed by Kansans, exemplifying their desire to defend their state and implicitly their own identity as state residents, against what they viewed as unjust criticism from outsiders.<sup>4</sup>

Another drought began in 1873, and a general economic panic also impeded Kansas settlement and kept the Kansas Pacific Railroad from meeting its bonds. In spite of these conditions, the push to open central and western Kansas continued, with the completion of the two major railroad lines, the Kansas Pacific (Union Pacific) and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe across the state (Fig. 3). But Kansas, like Nebraska, received more bad press the next year because of a particularly severe grasshopper invasion associated with the continuing drought in western Kansas. The boom period for Kansas immigration in the late nineteenth century took place between the 1870s drought and the blizzard that swept through the entire Plains in January of 1886. Another drought revisited western Kansas

shortly afterward. Beginning in the late 1880s and continuing until the 1930s, the state experienced milder winters and warmer summers. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, the cyclical characteristics of Kansas droughts already seem clear, but this was not yet accepted in the nineteenth century.

The second half of the nineteenth century was also the period in which daily weather data were first recorded for Kansas and the Plains. Weather data were collected by the US Army in Kansas beginning in 1836 and by the Smithsonian Meteorological Project starting in 1858. During the Kansas territorial period (1855-61), Manhattan, the county seat of Riley County, was the most westward of the Kansas stations for the Smithsonian. The United States Weather Bureau was established in 1870 and by 1874 had ninety-four sites, but only one was in Kansas, at Leavenworth on the Missouri border, which was also the state's largest city in the 1870s. A site at Dodge City was later established, serving as the sole site for the US Weather Bureau in western Kansas

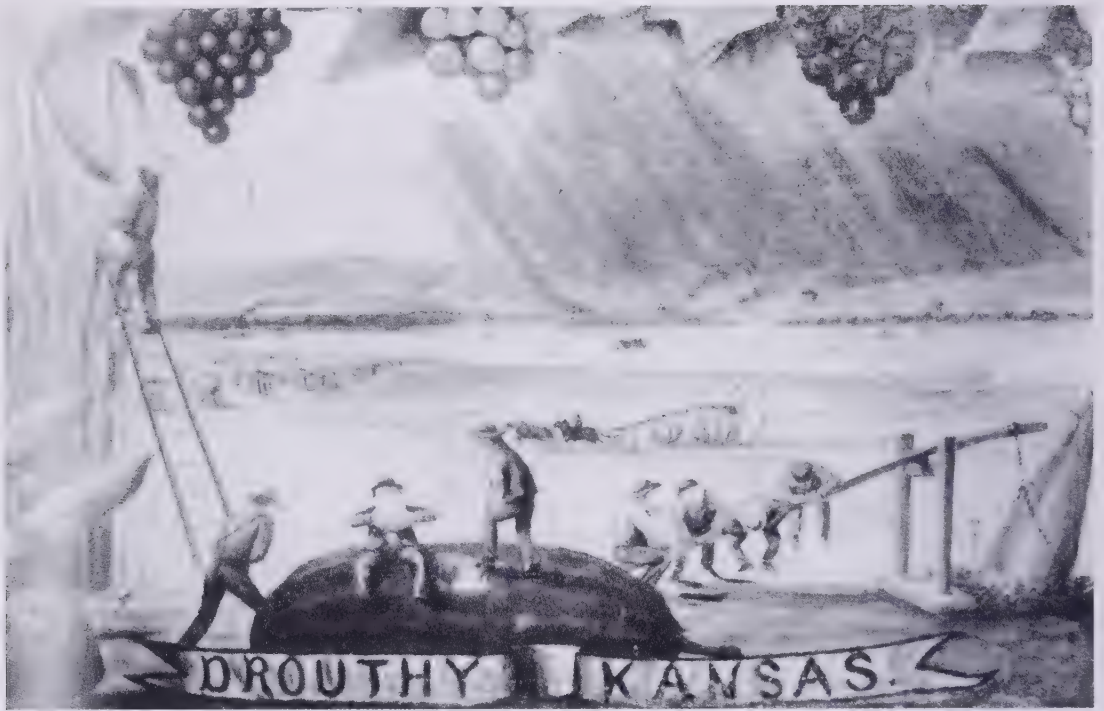


FIG. 2. "Drouthy Kansas" by Henry Worrall. Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.

at the time. Reliable weather data, then, was of a sketchy nature in Kansas during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Public knowledge of Kansas was often based on newspaper accounts, particularly in papers and articles published in the eastern United States, which focused on sensational events such as floods, blizzards, and insect infestations.<sup>5</sup> Emerging from these accounts were several dominant images of the Plains that were common throughout the country. At one extreme was the negative concept of the Plains as the "Great American Desert." Two related images labeled the Great Plains as both a "barrier" that must be penetrated and a "passage" to a new world. These images were used to impart the size and the difficulties of crossing the Plains to reach more economically favorable environments.<sup>6</sup> However, the image most useful to nineteenth-century promoters was that of the Plains as a "garden" for new immigrants.

The image of the garden was often employed by nineteenth-century promoters, and the second half of the century witnessed an enormous propaganda effort to redefine the Kansas climate as a positive resource for prospective residents. But the success of such boosterism was directly threatened by reports of drought. Farmers would not settle where they believed conventional farming techniques would fail. To reassure prospective farmers, as well as other would-be residents, promoters advanced several theories of increasing rainfall, and climate-change theories soon appeared in the promotional immigrant pamphlets. All the theories suggested that precipitation in the Plains was rapidly increasing and that there were fewer extreme weather events such as floods and tornados (cyclones).<sup>7</sup> Credit for the first theory of "rain follows the plow" belongs to Samuel Aughey and his assistant, C. D. Wilbur, of the University of Nebraska. Nebraskans, also eager for new settlers, devised



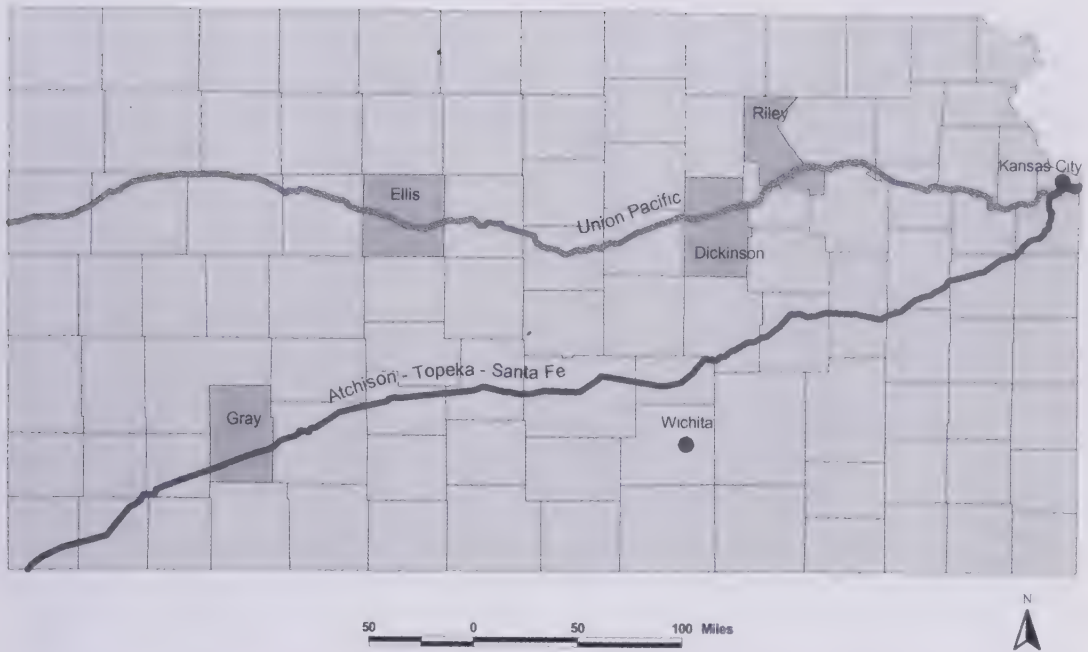


FIG. 3. *Kansas Historical Railroad Main Routes*. Source: USGS 2002. Map by Andrew W. Elmore.

the Timber Culture Act, which was supported by individuals who maintained that tree growth would cause more rainfall. Breaking the prairie sod, some thought, would also increase rainfall. Building telegraph wires and railroads were also proposed as rainmakers because of "the effect of the electrical currents running on rails and wires."

Settlement on the Plains was closely tied to railroad construction, and those railroads that had received large land grants to aid in construction promoted it strongly. In Kansas, while seven railroad companies received land from the federal government, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad and the Kansas Pacific Railroad received the largest grants. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe received 2,944,788 acres and the Kansas Pacific 3,925,791 acres.<sup>8</sup> Both companies set up promotional programs, published pamphlets, and employed agents to encourage settlement from the United States and Europe (Fig. 4). These

company efforts were aided by dwindling amounts of inexpensive land back east.<sup>9</sup> The number of residents in Riley, Dickinson, and Ellis Counties (Gray County was not yet formed) more than doubled.<sup>10</sup>

Observing the degree of acceptance in the popular mind of the new image of Kansas, Horace Greeley said, "[S]ettlers are pouring into . . . Kansas by carloads, wagon-loads, horse loads daily because of the fertility of her soil, the geniality of her climate, her admirable diversity of prairie and timber, the abundance of her living streams and the marvelous facility wherewith homesteads may be created."<sup>11</sup> Settlement in Kansas continued rapidly until 1874-75, the years of the worst of the grasshopper infestations in the Central Plains and the last of the Indian raids. After 1875 the young state prospered. The state census of 1875 listed 528,437 persons, and the federal census listed 996,096 in 1880, the greatest increase in any five-year period in the state's history.



FIG. 4. "Kansas!" Image by Henry Worrall. Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.

Despite Kansas's reputation for drought in the more western parts of the state, corn and wheat farmers arrived in large numbers. Corn acreage nearly doubled between 1875 and 1880, and wheat acreage trebled. Farmers were a vital part of the state's economy, except in the southwest, which was still largely in the hands of the cattlemen.

The prosperous years continued well into the 1880s, as the immigration wave reached the 100th meridian and all the Kansas counties including Gray were organized. By 1888 the state's population reached 1,514,000. The next year, however, the state's population declined for the first time, to 1,464,914. Some counties were harmed by the blizzard of January 1886, which effectively ended the days of the cattle kingdoms on the Plains. Another important factor in the population decline was the large debt held by Kansas farmers. At the

time of the 1887 general crash, undercapitalized farmers had mortgaged 69 percent of all Kansas land and the average per capita debt was about \$347, four times the national average.<sup>12</sup> According to the 1889 *Annals of Kansas*, the population loss that year was "accounted for by emigration to Oklahoma and the end of the 'boom.'" The next year the state's population again declined, to 1,423,485. The *Annals of Kansas* reported that a period of intense heat between June and August virtually destroyed the state's yearly corn crop. During the rest of the 1890s Kansas's population fluctuated between 1.3 and 1.4 million. The frontier had closed, and the Kansas boom was over.<sup>13</sup>

#### LANDSCAPE AS EXPECTATION

Various ethnic immigration societies and federal immigration boards, as well as state

immigration boards, were intensely interested in persuading people, especially farmers, to move to Kansas. Railroads also wanted to sell millions of acres of land and establish both freight and passenger haulage. Similar groups and individuals were at work throughout the Plains. Today, such circumstances might have resulted in a barrage of advertising in the mass media. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the media was ordinarily represented by pamphlets, books, or folders that might contain a few hundred words of often highly suggestive description (Fig. 5).

Examples from the surviving promotional literature can be categorized into three themes and stages. The first was characterized by writers who either had not been to Kansas or who were very recent arrivals. These were often individuals who were trying to encourage new settlement generally. The second was dominated by paid employees of the railroad companies and state organizations. Their work was complicated by the growing public perception of Kansas as a state that commonly experienced drought and other severe forms of weather and by mounting evidence from the US Weather Service, among others, that rain did not follow the plow. These documents are also characterized by the greatest variety of arguments against drought as well as against the reoccurrence of drought. By the third stage, another drought and another economic recession had taken place, and the paid promoters' descriptions of the state's climate and the prospects for settlers became more general, more muted, and some would say, more realistic.

#### 1854-1867: INVENTING A CLIMATE FOR A NEW TERRITORY AND A NEW STATE

Both Riley and Dickinson Counties were organized during the territorial period. Both had economic functions representative of their times. Riley County, established in 1855, had as its county seat Manhattan, which became the home of the state agricultural college. Dickinson County, founded in 1857, had as its county seat the city of Abilene, which be-

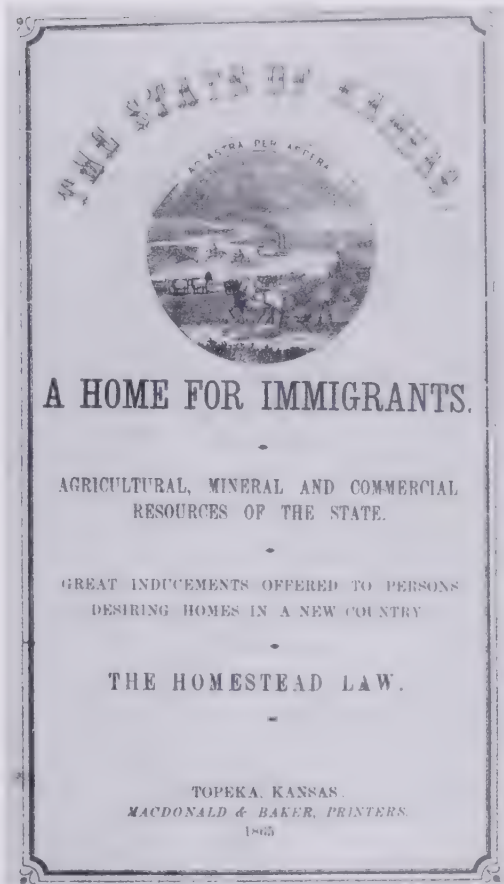


FIG. 5. *Immigration pamphlet, 1865.* Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.

came best known as one of the early cattle towns. Both towns were established before the coming of the railroad and both managed to secure railroad lines by the mid-1860s. The Kansas Pacific came first, beginning construction in 1863, first following the Kansas River and then heading west toward Hays in Ellis County. Without rail transportation, Kansas could not develop beyond a self-sufficient agricultural economy, and every town tried to anchor itself to one or more railroad lines. Immigration pamphlets were also published on behalf of both counties.

The earliest promotional books and pamphlets in Kansas are dated 1855-56, when the



territory was first opened for settlement. At this stage, writers used their own lack of experience of Kansas climate conditions to their own advantage, frequently contrasting Kansas weather very favorably with that of southern New England, the source area for new immigrants at the time. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was the preeminent town-founding organization in territorial Kansas, established to bring in "Free Staters." This group was instrumental in founding Lawrence, Topeka, and Manhattan. In the company's pamphlet, Thomas H. Webb, its secretary, admitted to his lack of personal experience but nevertheless optimistically compared the climate in eastern Kansas with that of southern New England. Here the idea of "temperate Kansas," which would appear in many other immigration pamphlets, is first introduced. Webb wrote, "[W]e believe, as a general rule, the variations there (in Kansas) will be less frequent and extreme than they are liable to be in this section of the country."<sup>14</sup>

The next year Sara Robinson, the wife of an Emigrant Aid Company leader, directly attacked the "Great American Desert" image of Kansas, saying that the continental travelers in the 1840s and 1850s had found this route to be one of "beautiful rolling prairies." Like Webb, Robinson immediately stressed the mild nature of the climate, saying that "two weeks of cold weather is called a severe winter."<sup>15</sup> Robinson's husband was also an important figure in the new Republican Party, whose 1856 campaign chant, "Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Men," was often applied to territory in the Plains. The Republican Party supported the continued expansion of free-state land (as opposed to slave-state land) populated by yeomen farm families. In the 1850s then, the open denial of the desert image of Kansas could be tied to Republican Party allegiance. Environmental images had been altered not by science but by politics, and after statehood, also by economics.

Samuel Crawford, the state's first governor after the Civil War, also encouraged immigra-

tion to Kansas by praising the Kansas summer breezes, so much so that they were referred to as "Crawford's zephyrs" in his promotional book, *The State of Kansas, a Home for Immigrants*, first published in 1865. There, he said,

The winters are short, dry and pleasant with but little rain or snow. . . . At the close of February we are reminded by a soft gentle breeze from the South, that the winter is gone. . . . During the summer there is always a cool refreshing breeze which makes even the hottest days and nights pleasant and delightful.<sup>16</sup>

Promotional literature published in this first stage was characterized by a tactic that is useful when presenting arguments about an unknown situation to an audience that has no other sources of information: a reliance upon authority. In other words, you should believe what we are saying because you can "trust us." Not surprisingly, the first materials were written by the sorts of individuals looked upon as providers of the best information then available—the wife of a political leader who had recently moved to the territory (Robinson), the secretary of an important immigration society that hoped to establish Kansas as a free state (Webb), and a state governor (Crawford). It was in the interest of all these parties to praise the Kansas climate and present it as an excellent one for farmers, and all did so, even Robinson, whose interest in the settlement of the territory was tied to a moral imperative regarding slavery. In addition to basing their arguments on the credibility of the source, the materials portrayed Kansas's climate as "temperate," with very mild winters, and hot summers offset by "cooling breezes."

#### 1867-1886: KANSAS CLIMATE EXTOLLED BY "SCIENCE"

In the early 1870s Ellis County was the most westward county in Kansas. The settlement of this county, now bisected by Interstate 70 in

the west-central part of the state, illustrates several common themes in Kansas immigration history. The association of Kansas with the image of a "passage" was typified by Ellis County, as it contained the main trail west to Denver during the 1860s and was protected by Fort Harker (1864-78), Fort Wallace (1865-78), and Fort Hays. Whereas settlement in the more eastern counties of Riley and Dickinson had at least partially preceded the coming of the railroads, settlement in Ellis County was tied largely to the route of the Kansas Pacific. Hays itself became a boomtown with the arrival of the Kansas Pacific in 1868.

By 1877 Hays's population reached almost 6,000, a peak it would not reach again until the twentieth century. During the same period many immigrant colonies were organized throughout the Plains. Ellis County, like Riley and Dickinson, was the destination of several colonies of European immigrants, mainly from Germany, Russia, and Sweden. Some colonies, especially those that experienced immediate difficulties with the Kansas climate, were failures, such as the Danish socialists' brief experiment outside Hays and the attempt by a Scottish merchant to establish an extensive cattle- and sheep-ranching business in his new town of Victoria, also in Ellis County. That venture was a failure, but when the lands were bought by new German Russian immigrants to whom the prairie life and its erratic climate were more familiar, Hays became the trading point for a large wheat-growing area, assisted by its location on the Kansas Pacific. In Ellis County the Kansas Pacific actively promoted the sale of its lands to foreign immigrants, but no concessions seem to have been made for cultural differences; the surviving pamphlets in German are merely translations of the English originals.

Several techniques were employed by a variety of individuals, especially railroad employees, to encourage a positive view of the Kansas climate. The two most common were an appeal to scientific knowledge, either

through the use of figures or by other means, and an appeal to positive imagery linked to Kansas, which presented the state as a place where farmers could find prosperity. With the publication of *A Sketchbook of Riley County, Kansas—the Blue Ribbon County* in 1881, the local Manhattan newspaper, the *Nationalist*, managed to incorporate both techniques. The authors, writing twenty years after the well-known droughts of the 1860s and 1870s, still felt obliged to address that issue, but downplayed their effects by reference to statistics:

It is true that Kansas is subject to occasional drouths. The rainfall is not as great here as in some localities—but there are many who know that too much rainfall is as hurtful as too little. By reference to meteorological tables, printed further, it will also be seen that our most abundant rains come in the season of the year that they are most needed, viz: spring and summer; and it is a well known fact that our soil can stand drouth better than that of most eastern States.<sup>17</sup>

Such arguments are representative of the second stage of promotional materials, which dominated the 1870s and 1880s and which sometimes focused on the "misrepresentation" of the Kansas climate in the national press and frequently on its "improvement" since settlement. In his article "Newspaper Images of the Central Great Plains in the Late Nineteenth Century," Baltensperger discusses the different objectives of editors from central Massachusetts, central Illinois, and eastern Nebraska compared to those of land promoters. Editors published information about events they considered "newsworthy," such as droughts, floods, and insect infestations. According to Baltensperger, as distance from the Plains increased, the detail and accuracy of available information about the Plains environment decreased.<sup>18</sup>

A common tactic among the immigration pamphlet writers was to admit a weakness but

then refer to either maps, tables, or a scientific authority to contradict the severity of the problem. This might present the reader with a disarmingly "honest" approach to the "known facts" about Kansas weather. Another tactic, which appealed to the scientific or technical interests of prospective immigrants, was what I would call the "centrist theory of climate," or latitudinal determinism. Here again, pamphlet writers mentioned several of the potentially dangerous characteristics of the Kansas climate as they relate to agriculture, ostensibly to present an impartial opinion, but these "problems" were quickly resolved by reference to either common sense or to scientific knowledge. Wayne Griswold, the author of a 1871 pamphlet, even alludes to this tactic in the subtitle of *Kansas, her Resources and Developments, or the Kansas Pilot Giving a Direct Road to Homes for Everybody, Also the Effects of Latitude on Life Locations, with Important Facts for all European Emigrants*. Griswold was one of the great Kansas climate spin doctors, for he managed to create an impression that the Kansas climate contained aspects of good health, good science, and even of physical excitement!

There is a peculiar atmosphere to Kansas, whether purer, drier, or containing more oxygen I can not say, but it has a most exhilarating effect on the system. It might be called champagne air. . . . The State of Kansas lying between thirty seven and forty degrees north latitude is just in the right position to avoid all extremes of heat and cold; also for a mild climate with no protracted winter.<sup>19</sup>

This centrist or latitudinal argument was taken up by another pamphleteer in 1878, who wrote that Kansas is

south of the cold and bleak influence of northern temperatures, and north of the depressing heat and humidity of the lower States. Both for location and climate influence it is the happy, equable mean between

the two extremes. . . . [W]estern Kansas is pre-eminently the paradise of the lungs.<sup>20</sup>

Immigrants to states and territories were considered part of a complicated system of commercial exchange, and their arrival was one of the principal sources of revenue and growth. The Kansas Immigration Bureau, founded in 1867, used the appropriations given by the state legislature to print pamphlets and folders praising the state's agricultural resources. The bureau's stance from the beginning was both defensive and ebullient. In 1871, more than ten years after the famous drought but three years before the worst of the grasshopper plagues, a pamphlet published by the bureau said that "the climate and soil of Kansas have put to shame all the vile slanders put upon them in the early days. . . . [N]ot only the practical farmers but also the statisticians have found the rainfall of Kansas is equal to the most favored section of our country."<sup>21</sup> The role of applied science in persuading farmers to move to Kansas was also considered by members of the state government. After Governor George T. Anthony suggested that the Kansas State Board of Agriculture would be the most effective agency to disseminate practical materials to prospective immigrants, the board's biennial reports included glowing reports of the state's agricultural resources for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Pamphlets were sometimes produced in an effort to stop an economic decline. As a college town as well as county seat, Manhattan's economy was somewhat protected from the vagaries of the local and national economy. Abilene was not so fortunate. Joseph McCoy settled upon Abilene as the site for a train depot to ship Texas cattle east and the cattle trade flourished there between 1867 and 1871. The town's fortune went into decline with the passing of its "cow town" days, and local businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce produced several pamphlets in an attempt to encourage growth. The First National Bank of Abilene printed *A Gem: Abilene, the City of*



*the Plains, the Centre of the Golden Belt.* The section on climate from this 1887 publication attempted to create an attractive image for prospective immigrants:

The climate of Kansas is exceptionally salubrious; winters mild and open; the summer heat is modified by a perpetual refreshing breeze, while the summer nights, are cool, refreshing, even charming. Of late years Kansas has had less disaster by cyclones than many smaller eastern states. The average elevation above tidewater for the entire state is 1,050 feet. The rainfall has become quite as regular and abundant as needful. The average annual rainfall has increased very much in the last fifteen years and the official record for seven years places it at nearly thirty-five inches per annum.<sup>22</sup>

Here too are the same descriptions seen in earlier examples of this literature, with a discussion of the moderating influences of the summer heat by perpetual breezes ("Crawford's zephyrs" again), the denial of any snow or low temperatures in winter, an avowal that rainfall had improved recently, and reference to official records to substantiate all claims.

Abilene and part of Dickinson County were also located along the Kansas Pacific Railroad line. The great success of a farmer along the line in Dickinson County became an advertisement for Kansas Pacific lands. By 1874 T. C. Henry had planted 10,000 acres of wheat, half along the railroad tracks, and conductors began pointing out his fields to their passengers as those of the "Kansas wheat king."

Since the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was also selling land in states other than Kansas, their promotional books and pamphlets often discussed the benefits of climate-change theories in a wider regional context. In 1880 B. C. Keeler presented another version of the "rain follows the plow" theory in a book with the appealing title *Where to Go to Become Rich*, which discussed the agricultural lands of Kansas, Colorado, and New

Mexico. Keeler maintained that the rain line was moving westward and would continue to do so if the population kept moving. For the best effect, areas must be thickly settled because

the rain line, or the line running north and south, east of which sufficient rain falls every year for agricultural purposes, has moved west steadily, year by year, at the rate of about eighteen miles per annum, keeping just ahead and propelled by the advancing population. . . . It was formerly supposed that the one-hundredth meridian would be the fixed rain line, and that all country west of that would never be devoted to agricultural purposes, but would be kept back by nature for stock raising, for which it is splendidly adapted. But even this theory is disappearing for the rain line continues to move west.<sup>23</sup>

The Kansas Immigration Bureau's pamphlet of 1883, written by commissioner of immigration G. B. Schmidt, focused, like many others, on the advantages of Kansas's central location, particularly in terms of latitude. According to Schmidt, the "thirty-ninth parallel, which has been the thread upon which as on the necklace of the world has been strung the jewels of wealth, culture, plenty, luxury and refinement, passes directly through the state of Kansas, through the fertile Arkansas Valley." Schmidt described the climate as "healthful beyond comparison."<sup>24</sup> The use of colorful images to emphasize the wealth that awaited (hardworking) farmers in Kansas was a common tactic used by writers of promotional materials. Here the author uses the image of the thirty-ninth parallel as a visible sign of prosperity, another example of latitudinal determinism.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe promotional literature began in 1873, shortly after the railroad line was completed and had received its share of government land. Not surprisingly, there was a good deal of rivalry

between that railroad line and the Kansas Pacific. In 1875 the Santa Fe followed an earlier example of the Kansas Pacific and organized a railway excursion for newspaper editors, designed to change the adverse reputation of "drouthy Kansas" and her grasshopper plagues. In return for the free trip, the railroad hoped for kind words about the Santa Fe lands from the newspaper editors. Included on the excursion were the state's governor, Thomas Osborn, Senator John Ingalls, and the secretary of agriculture, Alfred Gray (these last two gave their names to Gray County and its one-time county seat). The pamphlet that resulted from this excursion received the modest title *The Best Thing in the West, Strong and Impartial Testimony to the Wonderful Production of the Cottonwood and Arkansas Valleys*. This excursion was designed, according to the authors of this pamphlet, to "correct the erroneous impression that the grasshoppers were making a wide-spread and general devastation through Kansas." Here again the pseudo-scientific argument of the advantages of a centrist climate are invoked, this time by an editor from Iowa: "[T]he state of Kansas lies between 37 and 40 in latitude, Iowa lies between 41 and 44 degrees north latitude. It is evident then, that Kansas is free from the extreme cold of our winters."<sup>25</sup> The Santa Fe literature of the period also incorporated the notion of the westward progression of the rainbelt as well as the evocatively termed "golden mean." This rainbelt was created by a localized version of what is now referred to as the hydrologic cycle.

Promotional literature published by the railroads dominates the second stage, as the railroads had a good deal of land to sell to prospective settlers as well as the budgets to do so. Promotional materials reached their apotheosis during this stage. Published during the land-boom period, between the recessions of America's Gilded Age, they are exuberant examples of American enthusiasm, seductiveness, and sheer nerve. Immigration societies, individuals, and railroads companies all employed similar techniques of "scientific expla-

nation" and attractive metaphors. The railroad companies may appear to be the most brazen, if only because their views of the "best lands" are always those for sale by the railroad! The publication of climate-change theory as "fact" is unsettling to modern readers. Although some "experts" in this period were politicians, others were drawn from a wider variety of fields and included newspaper editors and amateur scientists. As in the first stage of promotional literature, there is very little discussion of the negative aspects of the Kansas climate.

#### 1887-1900: "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KANSAS?"

The final stage of nineteenth-century promotional immigration materials in Kansas coincided with the closing of the American frontier, the end of many of the cattle kingdoms in the American West, and the refutation of the climate-change theories. The lack of rain was a crucial characteristic of this stage because a significant drought took place from 1888 to 1895. The more muted claims by the authors of the immigration pamphlets reflected these changing times. Population generally increased during this thirteen-year period, which witnessed the settlement of the most westward of the Kansas frontier counties to be organized, including Gray County. Its settlement is used to illustrate some of the common immigration themes of this period in Kansas. Riley County's population, which was 10,408 in 1880, had reached 13,828 by 1900. In Dickinson County the population also grew, from 15,621 in 1880 to 21,816 by 1900. Ellis County saw an increase from 6,183 to 8,626. Gray County, the final county under consideration, reached 1,264 by 1900.

Farmers who arrived in southwest Kansas in the 1870s planned to use the farming methods that were customary in eastern Kansas and east of the Mississippi. During the early 1870s, rainfall was sufficient for conventional agriculture and occasionally even plentiful. Dodge City in 1877 reported twenty-eight inches of

precipitation. Tomayko believes that settlers were unprepared for the realities of the western Kansas climate because most of the information about the area was popularized during a period of unusually good farming weather. This, he said, was not a case of deliberate misinformation by promoters "but rather the dissemination of information gathered over too short a period of time."<sup>26</sup>

In 1887 Asa T. Soule, a New York promoter, laid out the town of Ingalls in Gray County, named for the long-serving US senator from Kansas. As the originator of the Eureka Irrigation Canal Company, Soule had the Arkansas River dammed at Ingalls and built a ninety-six-mile canal. The locals referred to this project as "Soule's elephant," for it was supposed to irrigate 40,000 acres of Ford and Gray Counties from the Arkansas River. More than ninety miles of canal were dug between 1884 and 1887, as well as fifty miles of lateral extensions from the main channel. The project failed because similar canals upstream in Colorado drained most of the water and the area was badly affected by the drought of the late 1880s and early 1890s. Soule also attempted to make Ingalls the county seat of Gray County, resulting in one of the better-known "county seat wars" of western Kansas. One man died during an attempt to move the official records between Cimarron and Ingalls. The county seat shifted back and forth between Ingalls and Cimarron (the largest settlement in the county) until 1891, when Cimarron became the permanent county seat.

By this time the claims made by writers of promotional pamphlets became more vague and were less likely to be as bold as those of earlier years. Critics of the "rain follows the plow" and other pseudo-scientific theories of increased rainfall were becoming more vocal. Henry Gannett of the United States Geological Survey questioned the theory in an issue of *Science* in 1888.<sup>27</sup> He was joined by Cleveland Abbe and William Moore of the U.S. Weather Bureau.<sup>28</sup> Even the Kansas State Board of Agriculture admitted its dishonesty in describing Kansas's agricultural potential. In 1895 the

board returned almost entirely to its original mission of supplying agricultural information and left the promotion of Kansas to others.

The Kansas Immigration Bureau had also begun to modify its tactics. By the 1890s the bureau had experience in emphasizing certain attributes of the Kansas climate while omitting others. It is during this decade that Kansas first became associated with sunshine and sunflowers. According to the Bureau in 1890, "Kansas can truthfully claim a greater amount of sunshine than the Eastern states."<sup>29</sup> An 1898 pamphlet published by the Santa Fe Railroad, entitled *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, freely acknowledged the negative identity possessed by the state during this period. Nevertheless, using a barrage of statistics showing populations and yields (for example, Gray County had a population of 1,105 and produced 33,348 bushels of winter wheat), the pamphlet's authors still spoke optimistically about the prospects for hardworking farmers.<sup>30</sup> Given the half century of recorded history of the environmental problems experienced by Kansas farmers, as well as the arguments against the theories of increasing rainfall, it is not surprising that the claims for the desirability of Kansas's climate for farming, especially in western Kansas, were becoming more muted. By 1902 Charles Harger, an Abilene newspaperman, could say that while in earlier periods Kansans had tended to extremes "from extravagant eulogy to bitter abuse," the newly named sunflower state "is being pictured to the world as it is."<sup>31</sup> The various images of Kansas show a progression from the amusing exaggeration of Worrall's "drouthy Kansas" to the idea of the "golden mean" to a more realistic but still attractive identification as the "sunflower state," which is reminiscent of the wonderfully warm climate first promised to the immigrants by Webb and Robinson back in the 1850s.

## CONCLUSION

Writing in 1881, during the peak of the Kansas land boom, the author of a Santa Fe



Railroad pamphlet said that

The successful development of the resources of a state or nation, especially if it be an agricultural one, is dependent more on the climate than on any other cause, excepting perhaps the enterprise and intelligence of its people. The climate is the first and great consideration of every seeker of a new home, and if this is not satisfactory neither soil, nor timber, nor water, nor any other advantage can be.<sup>32</sup>

Writers of promotional materials for Kansas immigration frequently alluded to what they described as the "healthy attributes" of the Kansas climate. The higher altitude of the western plains was often mentioned, as was the purity of the air, which one writer called "champagne air." Often these characteristics were contrasted with what were then called "the miasmas" rising from the lower, wetter regions. It is ironic that while lowlands and floodplains were associated with such all-too-real nineteenth-century terrors as typhoid and cholera, the dry, pure air of central and western Kansas was associated with aridity and drought. While praising the one, such writers were, to a careful reader, implying the other.

Much of the promotional literature was produced to discredit the series of negative stereotypes of Kansas that became commonplace. Kansas first came into the popular mind as "Bloody Kansas" during the territorial period, then as "Drouthy Kansas" in the 1860s, when the state was well known for its droughts. Finally, by the end of the nineteenth century, the image of Kansas became one of a dry, wind-swept area where a farmer and his family "busted," and either returned east to the "wife's family" or moved on to what was hoped were literally greener pastures. Immigration societies and the railroads claimed that "stickers" had more character, and anyway, they had sought not the indigent as farmers and settlers but hardworking people of some capital. In other words, it was a classic case of what we now call "blaming the victim." Such ideas were

countered by the young William Allen White in an essay about pioneers giving up the struggle in Gray County, first published in 1895. White defended the returnees, saying:

There came through Emporia yesterday two old fashioned "mover wagons" heading east. . . . [T]hese movers came from western Kansas, from Gray County, a county which holds the charter from the state to officiate as the very worst . . . most desolate spot on this sad old earth. They had come from the wilderness only after a ten years' hard, vicious fight. . . . For ten years they have been fighting the elements. They had seen it stop raining for months at a time. They had heard the fury of the winter wind as it came whining across the short, burned grass, and their children huddling in the corner. They have strained their eyes watching through the long summer days for the rain that never came. They have seen that big cloud roll up from the southwest about one o'clock in the afternoon, hover over the land, and stumble away with a few thumps of thunder as the sun went down. They have tossed through hot nights wild with worry, and have arisen to find only their worst nightmares grazing in reality on the brown stubble in front of their sun warped doors. They had such high hopes when they went out there, they are so desolate now—<sup>33</sup>

This is the tragic side of frontier settlement of Kansas at the end of the nineteenth century. The immigration boosters and promoters appealed to the ready willingness of the immigrant to believe that the "Great American Desert" had been transformed or that it had never existed. Potential settlers and Americans in general believed that the Plains would and should be settled, so it is not surprising that little criticism of these promotional efforts can be found. The promoters were supported by the country at large, which gave an added vitality and credibility to what now appear to be outlandish claims about Kansas's climate and its other resources. Americans in

1890 were still taken with the myth of the "happy yeoman" and with the plow as the symbol of individualism, hard work, and prosperity. Such mythologies may have worked successfully in more humid eastern areas, but in the western Kansas of a century ago they sometimes had tragic consequences. Today our inheritance of inappropriate land uses and more than 100 counties in a state with a stagnating population are the result of the hyperbole and wishful thinking woven by the promoters and spin doctors of the second half of the nineteenth century.

## NOTES

I thank David Kromm, professor emeritus of geography, Kansas State University, and the editor and three anonymous reviewers of the *Great Plains Quarterly* for their useful comments.

1. Carl Becker, "Kansas," in *Heritage of Kansas: Selected Commentaries on Past Times*, ed. Everett Rich (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960), p. 91.

2. Snowden Flora, "The Climate of Kansas," in *Report of the Kansas State Board, Climate of Kansas*, ed. J. J. Mohler (Topeka: Ferd. Voiland), p. 1.

3. N. Rosenberg, "Climate of the Great Plains Region of the United States," *Great Plains Quarterly* 7, no. 7 (1986): 22-32.

4. There is an extensive literature on the topic of the Plains image and on history of the image of Kansas. In addition to Becker (note 1 above), a more recent example for Kansas is Robert Smith Bader, *Hayseeds, Moralizers, and Methodists: The Twentieth Century Image of Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988). For other perspectives, see Brian W. Blouet and Merlin P. Lawson, eds., *Images of the Plains: The Role of Human Nature in Settlement* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), and Martyn Bowden, "The Great American Desert in the American Mind: The Historiography of a Geographical Notion," in *Geographies of the Mind*, ed. David Lowenthal and Martyn Bowden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Another recent example is P. A. Olson, "Cultural Perception and the Great Plains Grasslands," in *The Changing Prairie: North American Grasslands*, ed. A. Joern and K. Keeler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

5. B. H. Baltensperger, "Newspaper Images of the Central Great Plains in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the West* 19, no. 2 (1980): 64-70.

6. John L. Allen, "New World Encounters: Exploring the Great Plains of North America," *Great Plains Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1993): 69-80.

7. See, for example, David M. Emmons, *Garden in the Grasslands: Boomer Literature of the Central Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), for a thorough discussion of this topic, including the role played by Samuel Aughey.

8. Thelma Curl, "Promotional Efforts of the Kansas Pacific and the Santa Fe to Settle Kansas" (unpublished master's thesis, Department of History, University of Kansas, 1960).

9. Ralph Brown, *Historical Geography of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, World, and Brace, 1948).

10. M. E. Bird and R. E. Mickle, *Historical Plat Book of Riley County, Kansas* (Chicago: The Bird and Mickle Map Company, 1881).

11. Horace Greeley, *New York Tribune*, 9 October 1870.

12. William F. Zornow, *Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 166-67.

13. Jessie Small Owen and Kirke Mechem, *The Annals of Kansas 1886-1925* (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, n.d.), pp. 91, 115.

14. T. H. Webb, *Information for Kansas Immigrants* (A. Mudge and Co., n.d.).

15. Sara Robinson, *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life, Including a Full View of its Settlement, Political History, Social Life, Climate, Soil, Productions, Scenery, and Etc.* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Co., 1857).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains.* By Theodore Binnema. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. xvi + 263 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Theodore Binnema's engaging ethno-historical account of the peoples who once lived upon the Northwestern Plains is an excellent study in human relationships. Organized in a straightforward manner, its first two chapters explore the ecosystems of the Northwestern Plains and how hunters developed their techniques over thousands of years. Next, Binnema recreates the trade systems and routes in the protohistorical period and offers a sensitive analysis of the evidence for warfare on the Plains prior to the appearance of horses. Based upon careful research in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, he recreates the economic and social intricacies of the fur trade. Subsequent chapters explain how the arrival of horses and guns in the region changed patterns of warfare, trade, and social organizations. Binnema's perceptive depiction of the smallpox epidemic of 1781 makes clear how the disease radically altered internal social structures within bands and the associations bands had with each other and Euroamerican traders.

Binnema emphasizes the fluid structure of culture and its sometimes internecine affairs.

He avoids the use of terms such as "tribe" and prefers "band," which underscores kinship networks, and observes that bands maintained shifting coalitions or associations with each other in response to changing economics, demographics, and environments. This approach shows the influence of Arthur Ray's ethno-historical works.

Many environmental relationships are thoroughly explored. Where horses flourished, for example, a band such as the Blackfeet tended to have a distinct advantage over the Gros Ventres, who lived in a zone where horses thrived less well. Binnema pays little attention, however, to how large herds altered the Northwestern Plains biome and the ecological relationships among people. The work of Pekka Hämäläinen could have proven useful as a model here. Binnema's treatment of fluctuations in wildlife populations from 1700 to 1806 is slight. James Shaw, Head of Zoology at Oklahoma State University, has worked out an interesting model of how these historical changes can be traced.

Nonetheless, Binnema provides a fascinating historical account of a region and its peoples too long neglected and poorly understood. His work is a welcome and sophisticated study of the Northwestern Great Plains.

JAMES E. SHEROW  
Department of History  
Kansas State University

*Comanche Society: Before the Reservation*. By Gerald Betty. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002. xi + 239 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

While the merging of historical and anthropological outlooks has been a productive trend in Plains Indian studies, there are pitfalls. For one, the authority inherent in an accurate chronology or lively narrative can mask basic errors in social analysis. Sometimes historians have difficulty in properly employing the terms and principles of social organization so carefully wrought in the neighbor discipline. Readers get an epic infused with mistaken ethnology, resulting in a setback rather than advance in understanding.

So it is with Gerald Betty's *Comanche Society*. The work attempts to recast the history of Comanche expansion via chapters on kinship, migration, pastoralism, economics, and violence. Each chapter hinges on an ornate retelling of an episode such as the 1786 Comanche-Spanish peace or the 1821 interception of American trader Thomas James. One appreciates Betty's eye for nuances until the author assembles them to support untenable suppositions, driven by the concept that kinship was the determinative force in all matters Comanche. The imperative was sociobiological, with altruism as well as territoriality and brutality playing a part, notions derived from the largely unpublished corpus of anthropologist Lyle Steadman and other sources.

Trouble really starts when the author decides that the Comanches had lineages and clans that shaped organization and outreach. Such units never existed for the Comanches, and the only Native names for them supplied in the text actually refer to political divisions formed from bilateral bands. Elaboration of this false premise coincides with numerous other errors (on page 100, for instance, cultural specialization in regional trade is called a "division of labor," in a departure from the term's meaning fixed since Durkheim), unsupported generalizations (such as the claim

on page 119 that "Interpretations of Comanche economics have tended to assume a zero-sum situation in which the Indians lose"), and conclusions of dubious value (for example, the statement on page 120 that "Trade is social, whereas hostile behavior is fundamentally antisocial"). Prior writers are criticized for missing these points, and many a straw man is sent for a tumble, too.

A sophisticated review of Comanche kinship is indeed needed to complement other recent work on Plains populations involving cladistics and ethnogenesis. Such issues as the adaptive value of fictive kinship, the emergence of unilineal tendencies, and Southern Comanche-Caddoan admixture deserve further exploration. But the misappropriation of descent theory and adaptationism is devastating to the present effort. An odd appendix—ironically, a stand for empiricism—begins with the observation that "[T]he central thesis of this study could be wrong" (p. 145). It is, for at least one fundamental reason. How could this flaw get past the press? Publishing dissertations eagerly and without improvement also has its pitfalls.

DANIEL J. GELO

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University of Texas at San Antonio

*Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory*. By David LaVere. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xii + 292 pp. \$29.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Many are aware of Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal policy, which uprooted Native Americans from their homelands and drove them into Indian Territory. Few, however, are aware of the other side of removal, that is, the impact of the removed tribes on the Prairie and Plains peoples living in the region of the relocation. Removal crowded thousands of

Indian people of diverse cultures onto land that could not adequately support them, resulting in bitter conflicts between the Native peoples of the Southern Plains and the invading eastern strangers.

Those of us who are members of the tribes involved as well as scholars examining the people and the region have long been aware of this "other side of removal." Unfortunately, there has been little attention directed toward these conflicts since Grant Foreman's works of the 1930s. David LaVere has re-opened the broader topic in *Contrary Neighbors*.

After describing the cultures of the Southeastern and Plains tribes, LaVere traces the history of Indian Removal, providing a detailed description of the conflicts that occurred between the Southeastern Removed tribes and the Prairie and Plains people. While he includes all of the participants, he focuses specifically on the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole and their relations with the Caddo, Osage, Wichita, Comanche, and Kiowa. In a chronological narrative, LaVere recounts the nineteenth-century conflicts between these peoples.

In his introduction, LaVere sums up the cultural context for the conflict as follows: "Herein lies the heart of my argument. The Southern Plains Indians and Southeastern Indians existed as two wholly different peoples. They had completely different cultures, had different ways of life, and looked at the world in very different ways. . . ." He is correct, but errs when he groups all the participants into two categories. He later adds a third group, the Prairie Indians, but is inconsistent as to membership in these groups; moreover, such broad categorizing ignores the real cultural complexity of the people and the conflicts. LaVere tries, unsuccessfully, to stretch his cultural framework into the twentieth century, where it simply does not work. A lack of cultural understanding did indeed exacerbate the conflicts and made peacemaking more difficult, but the nature and the causes of the violence went well beyond cultural misunderstanding.

Despite the forced cultural categories and some minor factual errors, *Contrary Neighbors* is an important book. It provides a fine narrative of events and draws attention to the post-removal Indian Territory. LaVere's extensive annotation and thorough bibliography offer scholars a wealth of information for future research on this significant topic.

WILLARD HUGHES ROLLINGS  
Department of History  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

*The Black Regulars, 1866-1898.* By William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. xxviii + 360 pp. Photographs, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

As part of its 1866 army reorganization bill, Congress, presuming that black troops would be less prone to desert than white soldiers, reserved six of the sixty regiments for black enlisted men. Although subsequent reductions allowed for only four such regiments in a forty-five-regiment army, the all-black units functioned as their sponsors had intended. Stationed largely in the West until 1898, the men of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry regiments deserted far less frequently and reenlisted far more often than their white comrades. Their story has often been told, but never with the comprehensiveness, sensitivity, and tough-minded analysis found in William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips's *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898*. Combining a thorough scouring of printed materials with exhaustive documentation from court-martial testimony and pension records in the National Archives, the authors have crafted a readable and illuminating investigation not only of the black regulars, but of the army as a whole.

Dobak and Phillips demolish many of the myths and legends that have previously



clouded our understanding of the twenty thousand enlisted men who served in the four black regiments. They did not refer to themselves as buffalo soldiers, nor did they receive much attention from the contemporary press, white or black. Acknowledging that black troops faced considerable racial prejudice, the authors argue that "practical considerations" precluded any systematic institutional discrimination. The army was too small and its tasks too large to allow for any such luxury. Thus the army assigned officers and distributed horses, weapons, and equipment to the black troops no differently than it did to white units. In the army, the black regulars found an unusually impartial institution in a society plagued by racial discrimination and prejudice.

Naturally, the black regulars had their strengths and weaknesses. Dobak and Phillips argue that their stability and professionalism was counterbalanced by the shortages of men who could read, write, or carry out the skilled artisan crafts needed in the western garrisons. To have assumed that these men could have immediately overcome the problems stemming from ineffective army recruiting methods and the lack of education available to blacks in nineteenth century America, Dobak and Phillips contended, would be unrealistic. Thus the black regulars were good soldiers, but were no more "elite" than the men of other units.

Honest and enlightening, *The Black Regulars* deserves a broad readership.

ROBERT WOOSTER

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Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

*Performing the American Frontier, 1870-1906.* By Roger A. Hall. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2001. xi + 281 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00.

Roger Hall's engagingly written study of frontier drama provides a good overview of

the topic. Covering the period from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of cinema, the book surveys how eastern audiences reacted to frontier depictions, examining these reactions against the backdrop of contemporary debates about national policies affecting the settlement of the West. Hall has limited his discussion to plays produced in New York, which allows him to take advantage of a wealth of theatrical documents, including reviews printed in New York newspapers and trade papers of the day. He takes into account the often neglected elements of scenery, staging, and the quality of performances in his analysis, which helps him probe whether a play succeeded or failed as a consequence of its quality, the popularity of its star, its spectacular scenery, the opinion of the critics, or some combination of these factors.

The number of plays and productions discussed in the book is impressive. Hall does not neglect the performances of famous Westerners such as Buffalo Bill, or the dramatic efforts of such popular novelists as Brett Harte and Mark Twain, but he also includes careful examinations of the work of recognized theatrical greats such as David Belasco and Augustus Thomas. Of particular interest is his discussion of Native American playwright and actress Gowongo Mohawk.

Hall's main argument is that New York audiences participated in a revolt against the "aristocracy of the critics" by enthusiastically attending frontier productions in spite of terrible reviews. Hall says the opinions of these huge working class audiences eventually moved frontier drama from low-brow entertainment to high-brow art. Imbedded in this argument is the problematic claim that frontier plays improved as they moved from melodrama to realism, a positivist view that mars an otherwise strong argument for the value and influence of these dramas.

Hall's work complements three other studies of American melodrama. Jeffery Mason, in *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (1993), disagrees with Hall about the meaning of frontier plays, offering readers an interesting coun-

terpoint. Bruce McConachie's *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870* (1992) is more theoretical in approach and more sweeping in its coverage. Rosemarie Bank's *Theatre Culture in America, 1825-1860* (1992) contains excellent information about frontier drama that enriches Hall's work.

SARAH J. BLACKSTONE

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California State University, Chico

*Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems, and The Sun Dance Opera.* By Zitkala-Ša. Edited by P. Jane Hafen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. xxiv + 171 pp. Illustrations, bibliographical references, index. \$22.95.

This new collection of previously unpublished writing by Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Bonnin) marks a milestone in the scholarship of this crucial figure in Native literary and intellectual history. Meticulously researched, editor Jane Hafen's compilation advances our understanding of this Yankton Sioux writer, activist, and artist, about whom little has been documented. Hafen located a range of her writings in a variety of archives, from early poems written at Earlham College to Iktomi stories and the opera she created in collaboration with William Hanson in 1913.

In her introduction, Hafen provides the most accurate biographical overview of Gertrude Bonnin to date, showing how her life was shaped by major events in Native history as well as by her work with other notable Native intellectuals. Most striking in this introduction, as well as in the collection, is Hafen's discovery of previously unknown materials located in Hanson's papers at Brigham Young University. Contrary to popular assumptions that Bonnin ceased writing fiction after her brief period of national publication in *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*, Hafen's collec-

tion shows that she kept writing stories akin to those she had previously published, as well as works in other genres such as *The Sun Dance Opera*, revealing "the somewhat turbulent cultural waters that Bonnin navigated throughout her life."

Organized into three main sections—Stories, Poems, and *The Sun Dance Opera*—*Dreams and Thunder* embodies what Hafen foregrounds in her introduction: the versatility and complexity of Gertrude Bonnin's work. The explanatory sections that frame the texts are enormously helpful in relating them to Bonnin's career as well as to Yankton Sioux and Lakota/Dakota cultural and literary contexts, and in posing questions surrounding their production. For example, Hafen wonders what Bonnin's sources were for the Iktomi, Stone Boy, and other old stories, and why, if prepared for publication, they were never apparently submitted. In her incisive introduction to *The Sun Dance Opera*, Hafen details Bonnin's musical expertise, as well as the complexities of this puzzling and problematic collaboration, including Hanson's subsequent appropriation of the *Opera* as his own work. This particular text promises to extend current research on Bonnin, while the stories and poems will invite comparison to *Old Indian Legends* and stories such as "Soft-Hearted Sioux."

Hafen closes the collection with a selected bibliography as well as a genealogy of critical approaches to Bonnin, with an emphasis on how non-Native based approaches often have imposed limiting, even erroneous readings of Bonnin's life and writings. This is an indispensable addition to American Indian Studies in general and to Yankton Sioux literary history in particular.

SUSAN BERNARDIN

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State University of New York Oneonta

*Willa Cather and the American Southwest*. Edited by John N. Swift and Joseph R. Uργο. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. vi+ 172 pp. Illustrations, works cited, index. \$40.00.

Cather criticism has come a long way since Sharon O'Brien's 1987 biography, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice*. O'Brien had a singular take on Cather's trip to the Southwest in 1912, viewing this journey as a moment of psychological transformation, a tipping point when Cather became a creative rather than a merely professional writer. O'Brien emerged from a distinctive 1970s literary feminism, which placed the life-story of neglected writers within a psychoanalytical context. This new collection is, in contrast, a kaleidoscopic array of varied approaches to "Cather's Southwest."

A number of the essays are close readings of specific episodes, motifs, or characters: John Swift's piece on metaphors of wrapping/unwrapping in *The Professor's House*; Marilee Lindemann's essay on the "queer mesa" and male desire. Others lock a particular interdisciplinary body of contextual information onto the Southwestern novels. John Murphy writes on the interplay between science and religion; Matthias Schubnell explores German archaeology's impact on American readings of the "primitive." What these pieces point to is a widening-out of criticism from its roots in biography and its focus on Cather as "woman writer." There is real diversity here; but there is scepticism too. Cather's *oeuvre* has increasingly become a battleground for critics debating questions of gender, race, nationality. Walter Benn Michaels's *Our America* (1995), with its decoding of the political unconscious of US modernism, serves as a touchstone for a number of commentators. Ann Fisher-Wirth, writing on "Anasazi Cannibalism," voices doubts about Michaels's readings, while Lindemann seeks to offset his critique of homosociality in "Tom Outland's Story." Joseph Uργο's elegant "Multiculturalism as Nostalgia" maintains Michaels's scepticism, but

pushes Cather into a fresh, suggestive juxtaposition with Faulkner. What we see here is a certain maturity in Cather criticism. The work is critiqued; but, in turn, the critic becomes part of an ongoing debate within the academy.

Yet there remains a refreshing sense of outreach within the Cather community, well-illustrated by this volume. David Harrell's *From Mesa Verde to The Professor's House* (1992) was a pioneering study of Cather's engagement with the region's archaeology and anthropology. In a heterodox but welcome move, the editors asked Harrell, who left academe to work for New Mexico state government, to provide an afterword to the collection. His graceful and incisive overview is as practical an illustration of the broad church of Cather criticism as I can think of.

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*The Nature of Native American Poetry*. By Norma C. Wilson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. xi + 164 pp. Illustrations, bibliographical references, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

For the reader new to the field, perhaps attracted by an encounter with an individual poem or poet, Wilson's book offers genuine insights into the relationship among history, biography, and Native American poetry. Readers more familiar with contemporary Native American poetry will find good thematic readings that fall somewhere between an overview or appreciation on the one hand, and hard academic criticism on the other.

The book's introduction attempts to locate the emergence of Native American poetry in English as an articulation of a special relationship to the land and a partial response to the traumas of Native American history. Unfortunately, Wilson doesn't permit herself the space required to develop these arguments,



nor does she offer even a paragraph describing the vital role played by Joe Bruchac's *Greenfield Review* and Maurice Kenny's Strawberry Press in nurturing the writers whose work is central to her book.

The heart of Wilson's discussion consists of eight chapters on individual poets, all significant figures—Carter Revard, N. Scott Momaday, Simon Ortiz, Lance Henson, Roberta Hill, Linda Hogan, Wendy Rose, and Joy Harjo. Readers of *Great Plains Quarterly* may be especially interested in the work of Revard, Henson, and Hogan, all Oklahoma writers. By and large these chapters are biocritical essays, opening with biographical information before launching into chronological reviews of each writer's publications. Wilson allots several paragraphs to glossing the main themes of each poet's work, supporting her generalizations with fragmentary quotations from individual poems. One longs at times to trade this strategy for sustained close readings of individual poems. Particularly strong are the chapters on Joy Harjo and Lance Henson, the latter a treasure because so little of quality has been written about this important poet. On the other hand, she struggles with Scott Momaday and Carter Revard, in part, I think, because both writers owe so much to Euro-American literary traditions, a debt whose shape and dimensions Wilson does not effectively assess.

The volume concludes with a chapter surveying the work of some younger, lesser known poets, though Wilson never clearly articulates a rationale for why they, or the figures in the main body of her book for that matter, are singled out for attention. The list of references in the back combines literary and critical work, the latter represented only spottily. In the end, however, Wilson delivers what every reader who picks her book up must want it for: an authentic sense of each poet's individual voice.

ANDREW WIGET

Department of English  
New Mexico State University

*How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada.* By Helen Hoy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. x + 264 pp. Bibliographical references, index. C \$55.00 cloth, C\$24.95 paper.

Helen Hoy opens with a quotation from Eden Robinson's short story "Queen of the North" in which a non-Native asks, "How should I eat these?" The response is, "With your mouth, asshole." Hoy poses challenges of reading and understanding Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash*, Maria Campbell and Linda Griffith's *The Book of Jessica*, Ruby Slipperjack's *Honour the Sun*, Beatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree*, Beverly Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers*, Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*, and Eden Robinson's *Traplines*. She articulates her position carefully, presenting a scholarly argument that frequently cites the critical and theoretical perspectives of her contemporaries. Interspersed with this critical positioning, she offers personal anecdotes and narrative, making her book read like an extended conversation. Her approach, as indicated by the interrogative in her title, is not to take any single position, but to pose questions and describe her process and the challenges she has faced reading, teaching, and thinking about these seven works.

*Slash*, for instance, teaches Hoy to confront her own "racism and cultural arrogance" and leads her to discover that the text offers a strategy for how readers might read it from "the inside out." Her discussion of *The Book of Jessica* examines issues of cultural appropriation and the challenges of collaboration, noting how cooperation quickly dissolves into co-optation. *Honour the Sun*, in ways different from *Slash*, suggests means that readers might use to learn to listen to silence. She considers how Culleton raises questions of authenticity and identity throughout *In Search of April Raintree*. Identity is not static, but dynamic; the construction of self is a process of on-going negotiation, multiple affiliations, and positionings. Hoy looks at how Beverly Hungry Wolf, in *The Ways of My Grandmothers*,

further challenges Eurocentric notions of individuals and individualism by creating an innovative form of life-writing that is not about the self, but foregrounds relations and relationships. Hungry Wolf offers readers "more than just a genealogical and tribal positioning"; she creates a "cumulative layering of relational mappings." In so doing, she does not focus on her self or her story, but "locates herself primarily as the repository of what others have to tell," thereby challenging the "dismissal or erasure of Blackfoot women's lives."

According to Hoy, Maracle's *Ravensong* offers opportunities for readers to re-think their assumptions and "repositions both white and Native reader" so that the "Native reader is the one with full citizenship." Finally, in considering Robinson's *Traplines*, Hoy discusses the trap that readers and critics fall into when they categorize or read these writers solely as Native authors and consider their works only in a colonial context.

Hoy's conversations are engaging, but at what point does cultural sensitivity become intellectual timidity? She figuratively describes her book's structure as "a series of switchbacks on a 'mountain trail'"; one function of a trail, however, is to go somewhere. Certainly writers, like hikers, should appreciate and acknowledge their process, but those who just engage with their process without articulating their direction may end up lost.

Drawing on Eden Robinson's quotation for her title and her approach to her book, Hoy seems to shrink from a parallel bluntness in her analysis.

"How should I read these?"

With your eyes and mind open.

DEE HORNE

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University of Northern British Columbia

*West of the American Dream: An Encounter with Texas.* By Paul Christensen. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001. xv + 340 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.

In 1974, fresh from his doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania, poet and critic Paul Christensen set out for his first teaching job, in College Station, Texas, at Texas A&M. Eastern by education and temperament, and as yet unsteeped in Texas culture, Texas literature, or Texas landscape, Christensen was somewhat uncertain about what to expect in his new setting. Almost thirty years later, however (and still at Texas A&M), Christensen now looks back on the years and on his own experiences in *West of the American Dream*, a rich, wide-ranging, evocative work combining his critical eye for the overall movement and direction of the region's literature with his own personal reminiscences about his place in that literature and his life in its rhythms and movements.

Christensen begins his study with a long description of his move to Texas, his trepidation about employment at Texas A&M, and his slow acculturation to Texas and Southwestern culture. In the middle chapters, he mixes a scholarly approach to Texas and Southwestern culture and literature with anecdotal accounts of students, friends, and fellow writers who embody the various qualities he identifies with. Christensen devotes a good portion of the middle of the book to Texas writers, about whom he writes extensively and fondly. He describes his encounters, personally and imaginatively, with figures such as Naomi Shihab Nye, William Barney, Vassar Miller (one of several writers about whom Christensen devotes an entire chapter), Walt McDonald, and Susan Bright. The particular value of the contemporary poet, in Christensen's eye, is the way in which he or she has wrestled with what Christensen sees as the rather intractable subject matter of the Plains and the Southwest and emerged with a new and effective expression of that material.

In the chapter "How to Read a Poem," Christensen's accounts of experiences with Texas poets reflect his own ideas about how poems operate, how they can reflect region, and how they imaginatively create the Southwest as a place in the mind. Toward the end of the book, he devotes individual chapters to three deceased Texas-based writers whom he considers to be particularly memorable—poets Vassar Miller and Ricardo Sanchez ("Zero Mostel of the Hispanic down under") and playwright Charles Gordone. Two of these writers, Sanchez and Gordone, were Christensen's personal friends. In each writer's work he locates some of the same curious exploration of the regional ethos that permeates his own encounters.

A little bit scholarship, a little bit regional commentary, a little bit memoir, *West of the American Dream* is as good as anything recent I know of at planting the reader squarely in the history, major themes, and mind-set of the American Southwest and its literature. Because Christensen has dwelled in the region for a quarter century now, and has himself been an active and valuable contributor to the region's cultural life, he is ideally situated to have written such a volume. Rich, genial, and fascinating in execution, the book takes us on a learned journey into the psychic landscape of the Southwest, from which we emerge better informed and wiser.

ROGER JONES

Department of English  
Southwest Texas State University

*Studies in American Indian Art: A Memorial Tribute to Norman Feder.* Edited by Christian F. Feest. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002. vii + 208 pp. Illustrations, line drawings, maps, notes, index. \$35.00 paper.

Norman Feder (1930-1995), a pioneer in the field of Native American art history and material culture, began his career in a com-

munity of amateur collectors and "artifakers" (Feder's term for serious hobbyists who produced high-quality reproductions of Indian crafts). His periodical, *American Indian Hobbyist* (begun in 1954 and renamed *American Indian Tradition* in 1960), spawned many careers in anthropology and Native American history. Later, Feder's professional experience included positions at the Denver Art Museum, the Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian, and major exhibitions and catalogs at the Brooklyn Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Feder served as an editorial consultant for *American Indian Art Magazine* from 1977 until his death. Without the benefit of formal academic training, Feder had an unfailing connoisseur's eye and, from his hobbyist background, a firsthand understanding of Native American techniques and styles. His research pioneered in the use of historical drawings, archival photographs, and collection records, and he was one of the first to bring the resources of European collections and museums to American audiences. Among his earliest work was a systematic examination of the Francis Crane Collection in the Denver Museum of Natural History, which identified a number of "artifakes" and misidentifications. Contributor Ruth Phillips cites Feder's careful work as "foundational" and identifies his "legacy of meticulous collections-based documentation and connoisseurship" as the bedrock "upon which all current analyses and interpretations rest."

Arthur Einhorn, Joyce Herold, Tilly Laskey, Roanne P. Goldfein, and Christian Feest offer insight into Feder's background and practice, but a more developed and critical overview of Feder's legacy is lacking. The volume also includes recent work in Feder's meticulous tradition and spirit, much of it relating to the Great Plains. Notable contributions include Colin F. Taylor's study of stylistic development in Crow ceremonial shirts, Bill Holm's study of Plains quill-wrapped horsehair techniques, Arni Brownstone's analysis of seven unidentified Plains hide-paintings, Imre Nagy's exploration of Cheyenne cosmological iconog-



raphy, and William Sturtevant's documentation of the provenance of the German Speyer Collection.

Most interesting is the synthetic body of research that proceeds from the foundational work of Feder and his generation to weave complex, cross-cultural narratives. Notable contributions are Molly Lee's study of Alaskan Eskimo art and the turn-of-the-century Nome Gold Rush, Marvin Cohodas's study of non-Native influence on pictorial imagery in California basketry, and Phillips's multi-cultural history of Great Lakes quilled bark shells.

BILL ANTHERS  
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*Beauty, Honor, and Tradition: The Legacy of Plains Indian Shirts.* By Joseph D. Horse Capture and George P. Horse Capture. Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution; Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Distributed by the University of Minnesota Press, 2001. 159 pp. Map, black and white and color photographs, index, bibliography. \$34.95 paper.

The study of Plains Indian art is currently in a transitive stage. Because of the enthusiasm of several non-Native researchers and scholars in the eighties and nineties—like Norman Feder, Dennis Lessard, Richard Conn, John C. Ewers (just to name those who have already passed away)—the appreciation of Plains Indian beadwork and quillwork almost reached the highest levels of connoisseurship, and prices for these pieces rose to the stars. At the same time, our knowledge of tribal or regional styles clarified to a certain degree, and our vision became less obscured by century-old misconceptions. The presence of Native American scholarship also became apparent during these decades, bringing refreshing voices to the field.

The publication of *Beauty, Honor, and Tradition* is an important contribution to Native American art studies in general and to Plains Indian art in particular. The beauty and elegance of Plains Indian shirts should grip any admirer of Native American cultures. The display and survey of these amazing creations presented here evoke new, informed inquiries.

Father and son, George P. Horse Capture and Joseph D. Horse Capture, members of the A'aninin (formerly known as Gros Ventre) tribe, co-curated the exhibition of the same title at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York, for which this publication served as catalogue. Its format, typography, and photographic quality deserve only the highest praise. Unfortunate is the absence of a single measurement for the selected shirts, although the 2001 *Charter Member Calendar* of the NMAI illustrates thirteen shirts from the same collection (ten of these "participated" in the exhibition), all with exact measurements.

The pieces in the exhibition were selected from more than four hundred shirts, all from the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian. Although it is hard to accept the authors' statement that "relatively few Plains war shirts survive in museum collections or private hands," even this single collection would provide a sufficient number of examples to illustrate the stylistic differences of all Plains art areas. Thus it is hard to understand why only the Crow, as indicative of a tribal style, and the Southern Plains, illustrating a regional style, were selected. Based on Lessard's groundbreaking 1990 paper in the *American Indian Art Magazine*, the co-curators would be able to define and illustrate the characteristics of the Northern and Central Plains art areas as well. Their uncertainty is attested to, for example, by their claim on page 58 that "This shirt is catalogued as Blackfeet, but it could have been created by a member of any number of tribes located in the upper Missouri region in the early nineteenth century."

Declaring that a chronological presentation would be misleading, the authors follow a

"thematic" approach, without defining what this term means for them. In addition, the volume contains some annoying inaccuracies. On page 104, for instance, they describe the magnificent Northern Cheyenne quilled shirt (01.3931), noting that "on the lower portion of the shirt, a series of horse tracks has been drawn with three X's below," while actually four X's are painted. On page 58, describing an early quilled shirt from the Upper Missouri region (02.9035), they declare that the artist plaited the quills onto the shirt's surface, while a detailed photograph on page 60 clearly shows that the quillwork was done on a separate strip of leather, then sewed to the shirt's surface. A more thorough editing could have avoided mistakes like these.

These reservations aside, the volume is an important visual source for Plains Indian decorative arts and a starting point for any exploration of the rich heritage of Plains shirts.

IMRE NAGY  
Ferenc Mora Museum  
Szeged, Hungary

*Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Pow-wow.* By Tara Browner. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. xii + 163 pp. Map, photographs, illustrations, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Powwows have been a powerful expression of cultural identity in Indian country for much of the past century. Adaptive and innovative, they are good examples of how some Native people simultaneously maintain connections to tradition and embrace new trends, but their history and meaning have received relatively limited attention. In this slim volume, Tara Browner combines an insider's perspective with a scholarly bent to give readers an informative account of Northern Plains powwow ways.

Browner begins by situating Northern Plains powwows in a broad historical context, but

her interpretation will likely raise some eyebrows. Unlike virtually every other scholar who has discussed the powwow's origins, Browner rejects the notion that nineteenth-century Plains dance societies diffused patterns that eventually produced the powwow. She is especially critical of Clark Wissler (whom she says misunderstood the Omaha Dance and the Grass Dance), but extends her critique to more recent scholars as well, most notably William K. Powers. While Browner is correct in asserting that the powwow's origins are complicated, she ignores accounts by Robert Lowie, Pliny Earle Goddard, James Mooney, William Meadows, George Dorsey, and Regina Flannery, to name only the most obvious, that tend to overwhelm her interpretation.

She is on firmer ground in her discussions of experience and meaning. Browner's chapter on songs is revealing in its insights on the use and power of music. Likewise, her conversations with singers are suggestive of song's many complexities. Her extensive use of Western notation, however, tends to emphasize mechanics and thus skirts a more nuanced discussion, something that will strike some readers as problematic. R. D. Theisz's work on Northern Plains song traditions is conspicuous by its absence.

By far the most engaging parts of the book are Browner's discussions with powwow people. Readers will appreciate hearing from the young women, elders, and singers whose voices take us inside the powwow world. Her description and analysis of dance styles are generally quite good, and her discussion of a typical powwow is full of insights. But her emphasis throughout on "consecrated performance space" and "sacred happenings" downplays the somewhat more complicated and often pedestrian nature of such gatherings. Her interview with George Martin hints at some of these issues, but, for the most part, Browner views powwows through a largely celebratory, uncritical lens.

Readers looking for an introduction to the essentials of Northern Plains powwows will find much to like in this volume. Browner

writes with confidence and style, gives plenty of room to powwow people and their voices, and tells a good story. Scholars will quibble with some of her interpretations, but in the main she has given us a useful account.

CLYDE ELLIS  
Department of History  
Elon University

*Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth.* By Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001. xii + 225 pp. Notes, bibliographical references. \$26.95.

The fertile mind of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn has produced essays, lectures, and papers on an array of issues confronting Native America, a selection of them presented here. Writing from a Dakota-centered view, Cook-Lynn provides analysis and commentary on oppression that arises and takes shape out of language, knowledge production, and misrepresentations of Indian people on the part of individuals and institutions. Literature, federal Indian policies, the academy, American Indian Studies, scholarly theoretical trends, and art are indices to Anti-Indianism in America.

Cook-Lynn's authoritative assessment of the state of Native American Literary Studies provides insight into her appreciation of the complications and contradictions that colonialism plants and perpetuates. She criticizes the academy and Native writers alike for Native identity fraud, cooptation of Native academic elites, avoiding critique in Native literature, and Indian writers' preoccupation with the slippery slopes of identity at the expense of pressing issues of tribal nationalism. For Cook-Lynn, American Indian Studies, too, is failing if it is not first and foremost concerned with the history and present state of tribal political welfare.

The academy has successfully erased Indian history from the American narrative and his-

tory departments. Monographs, exhibitions, documentaries, and Disney movies perpetuate sanitized American historical narratives. The responsibility to correct a seemingly irreversible erasure falls to American Indian Studies, Native scholars, and Native fiction writers. For Cook-Lynn, the problematic "tribeless" voice of some Indian fiction writers produces a literature that offers emotional satisfaction, but little substantiated tribal knowledges.

In the most compelling essay, which discusses the Indian-white reconciliation movement in South Dakota, Cook-Lynn connects contemporary issues of land reform, water rights, and the Pick-Sloan plan with the shell game of federal fiduciary and trust responsibilities, tribal sovereignty, and relentless efforts to expand state authority over tribal governments. For Cook-Lynn reconciliation is unconscionable and impossible while the state continues to dispossess Indians of land, destroy Indian economies, and simultaneously undermine sovereignty and evade trust responsibilities. As a youthful witness to her father's involvement in tribal affairs and observer of the destructive impact of Pick-Sloan, she provides a "Native voice" that moves the study of federal Indian policies from abstraction to human experience.

The authority of this strong and useful collection is undermined only by Cook-Lynn's essay on the late Michael Dorris. Limited resources of a small Native academic and writing community must be devoted to the productive critique of Native writers and scholars in the hope and anticipation of opening new lines of inquiry.

As Robert Williams has cogently observed, "language is [and continues to be] the perfect instrument of empire." Cook-Lynn's unsparing message is that disciplined language is also a necessary instrument for contesting colonialism.

JACKI THOMPSON RAND  
Department of History and American Indian  
and Native Studies Program  
University of Iowa



*Telling Stories, Writing Songs: An Album of Texas Songwriters.* By Kathleen Hudson.

Foreword by Sam Phillips. Introduction by B. B. King. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. xviii + 300 pp. Photographs, biographies, and selected discographies. \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

On the surface, a book chronicling interviews with prominent and influential Texas songwriters would be quite welcome to students of regional American music styles. Many of the artists included are unfamiliar to the general public, but have contributed much to the development of folk, country, and rock styles in the past half-century.

Author Kathleen Hudson selected thirty-four subjects to profile, from honky-tonk and western swing pioneer Floyd Tillman to Tex-Mex chanteuse Tish Hinojosa. Unfortunately, Hudson chose to structure her book as a series of oral histories, her questions and her informants' responses transcribed verbatim in each chapter. Her unchallenging, simplistic questions, name-dropping, and fawning quickly prove wearisome. Is it really important that we learn that Hudson went to a music conference in Cannes, France, with Gary P. Nunn?

As a result, any one of the chapters would have made a fine Friday article in the enter-

tainment section of a regional newspaper or fan magazine, but as literature, thirty-four such interviews are thirty-three too many. Hudson would have been far better served by turning the interviews into either first person narratives or chapters using her respondents' answers to elucidate the Texas songwriting scene, something sorely missing from this book.

Hudson's questions interrupt rather than amplify the flow of information from her informants, which is what we are really interested in reading. Unchallenging queries such as "Is there a song that is special to you?" "Any advice to young writers?" and comments like "Let's talk about your new album" are strictly "Entertainment Tonight" fodder and not something a seasoned oral historian should resort to using, much less printing in a book. The three-hundred-page tome easily could have been cut by a third by eliminating Hudson's questions and including more from her subjects.

Considering the wealth of information and attitudes offered by these subjects, one can still find much of value here—if one can skip past the inane questions.

CARY GINELL  
Toluca Lake, California

## BOOK NOTES

*Dictionary of Midwestern Literature. Volume One: The Authors.* Edited by Philip A. Greasley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Photographs, appendix, contributors, index. xii + 668 pp. \$59.95.

This initial volume of a projected three-volume set includes entries on more than four hundred authors, surveying their lives, and relevant criticism.

*The University of Manitoba: An Illustrated History.* By J.M. Bumstead. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001. Photographs, figures, illustrations, epilogue, appendix, selected readings. xii + 228 pp. \$34.95 paper.

Through archival research, rare photos, and student memoirs, Bumstead chronicles the history of the University of Manitoba from 1877 to 1977, its first hundred years.

*Willa Cather: The Contemporary Reviews.* Edited by Margaret Anne O'Connor. Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Illustrations, index. xxvi + 550 pp. \$130.00.

Limited to those works Cather prepared for publication herself, this twelfth volume in the American Critical Archives series is organized chronologically according to publication dates of Cather's works.

*Children of the Dragonfly: Native American Voices on Child Custody and Education.* Edited by Robert Bensen. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001. Notes, works cited, list of contributors. xviii + 282 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Through autobiography, interviews, fiction, poetry, and traditional tales, US and Canadian Native authors explore the subject of removal, relocation, and adoption, telling how they have survived, culturally, in a world always threatening to change them.

*Petticoat Prisoners of Old Wyoming.* By Larry K. Brown. Glendo, WY: High Plains Press, 2001. Photographs, epilogue, appendix, index. 256 pp. \$14.95 paper.

Larry Brown's third book about the early days of Wyoming details the lives and crimes of the state's first female convicts.

*Minister to the Cherokees: A Civil War Autobiography.* By James Anderson Slover, edited by Barbara Cloud. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. Illustration, index. xxxiv + 212 pp. \$47.50.

Slover's autobiography recounts his transitions from the South to Indian Territory and eventually to the West Coast, including his years as a Baptist missionary to the Cherokees in Indian Territory during the Civil War.

## NOTES AND NEWS

### FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

We are pleased to announce that the 2003 Frederick C. Luebke Award for outstanding regional scholarship has been awarded to Bernard Lemelin, Associate Professor, Department of History, Laval University, Quebec City, Canada, for his essay, "Congressman Usher Burdick of North Dakota and the 'Un-godly Menace': Anti-United Nations Rhetoric, 1950-1958" [*Great Plains Quarterly* 22.3 (2002): 163-81]. The prize, named for the founder of the *Quarterly*, is given each volume year for the best article published in the *Great Plains Quarterly*. One judge remarked that Dr. Lemelin's essay was a good example of what the *Quarterly* should do: publish articles on topics that inform us about the past of the Great Plains, yet cover topics that are relevant to contemporary issues. Lemelin's essay related the xenophobic and demagogue rhetoric of the 1950s to the same sort of rhetoric you still hear today. The Frederick C. Luebke Award includes a cash stipend of \$250.

### NATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

The 2003 Plains Indian Seminar at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center will be held 2-5

October 2003. The seminar will address the theme: Native Perspectives on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Thomas Jefferson viewed the American West as a chosen country suitable for territorial expansion and colonization by generations of Euro-Americans. The western lands explored through the expedition, however, were homes for the hunting, farming and fishing indigenous nations of the Central and Northern Plains, the Plateau, and the Northwest. As the Corps of Discovery pursued geographic, political, commercial, and diplomatic objectives, how much of the complex cultural landscape observed and encountered did members comprehend? What were the historical repercussions of the expedition and what is its significance to contemporary Native Americans? Topics of papers being presented at the seminar include Native oral history related to Lewis & Clark, the role of Sacagawea, how tribal colleges teach the story of the expedition, and impact and effects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Historians, anthropologists, educators, art historians, folklorists, artists, and educators from tribal communities will be presenting.

For more information contact: Lillian Turner, Public Programs Director, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY 82414-3428 <<http://www.bbhc.org/pis/2001speakers.html>>.



CALL FOR PAPERS:  
NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES  
OF THE LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITION

*Great Plains Quarterly* will be publishing a special thematic issue on Native American perspectives of the Lewis & Clark expedition into the Great Plains. Submissions may include descriptions and analyses of encounters between Lewis & Clark and the tribal people on the Plains, how these encounters affected Native people (both in the past and today), Native perspectives on the Lewis & Clark commemoration activities, and other topics that address the convergence of Native people and the expedition. Native people encountered by Lewis & Clark on the Plains include Arikara, Assiniboiné, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Chinook, Clatsop, Crow, Hidatsa, Iowa, Kansa, Lakota, Mandan, Missouria, Nez Perce, Omaha, Osage, Otoe, Pawnee, Ponca, Salish, Shoshone, Spokane, Teton, Tiliamook, Yakima, and Yankton-Yanktonai.

Please send submissions by 15 October 2003. For more information, contact Charles A. Braithwaite, Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, P.O. Box 880245, Lincoln, NE 68588-0245; (402) 472-6178; cbraithwaite2@unl.edu. Our submission guidelines can also be found at <<http://www.unl.edu/plains/gpq.htm>>

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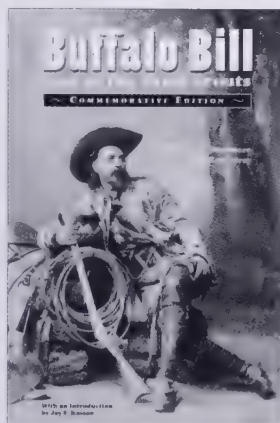
The 47th Annual Missouri Valley History Conference will be held 4-6 March 2004, in Omaha, Nebraska. Proposals for individual papers or panels in all areas of history, including public history, are welcome. A prize of \$200 will be awarded to the best graduate student paper. Proposals, consisting of abstract(s), and a one-page vitae, should be sent by 15 October 2003 to the program coordinator, Dr. Tom Buchanan, Missouri Valley History Con-

ference, Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182. See <<http://www.unomaha.edu/Uno/history/mvhchome.htm>> for additional details. The conference email is <[mvhc@unomaha.edu](mailto:mvhc@unomaha.edu)>.

The Society for Military History will sponsor several sessions at the 2004 Missouri Valley History Conference [see above] Please send proposals related to military history directly to Dr. Kevin K. Carroll, Department of History, P.O. Box 872501, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-2501; email <[kcarroll@asu.edu](mailto:kcarroll@asu.edu)>.

RESEARCH FACILITIES:  
MUSEUM OF THE GREAT PLAINS

The Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton, Oklahoma is dedicated to the collection, preservation, interpretation and exhibition of materials pertaining to the cultural and natural history of the Great Plains of North America. The Museum of the Great Plains Archives holds over 570,000 primary documents donated by area residents. The private research library of Dr. Waldo Wedel, archaeologist emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution, contains archaeological and historical reports, monographs, journals and books amassed by Waldo and Mildred Wedel. The Museum of the Great Plains Research Library holds over 25,000 volumes and monographs specializing in the prehistory, natural history, and regional history of the Great Plains. The Photographic Collection includes over 80,000 images donated from area residents, local photographic studios, the Lawton Constitution, and other early newspapers. Images include early settlement of the Southwest, North American Indian culture, local military involvement, wildlife and outdoor scenes, and daily family life in rural and urban Oklahoma and Texas. Prints are available for personal use, publications, and exhibitions. For more information contact the Special Collections Curator at <<http://mgp@museumgreatplains.org>>.



### Buffalo Bill

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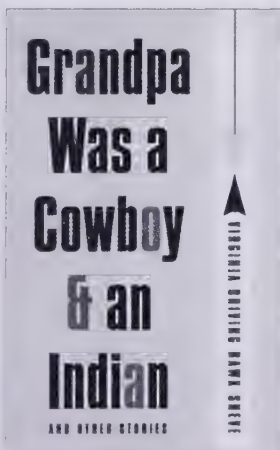
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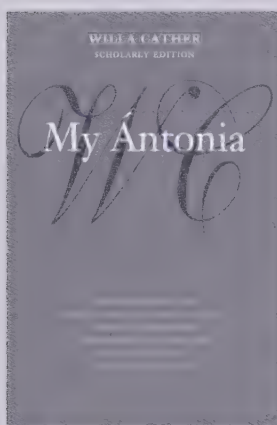
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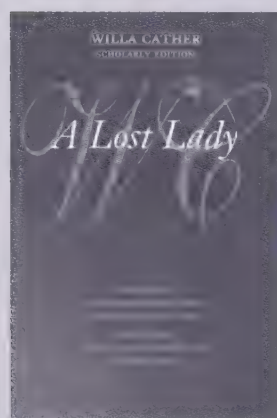
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#### FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in *Great Plains Quarterly* during a volume year. All articles submitted to the *Quarterly* are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from the editorial board of the *Quarterly*. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies' annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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# BLACK ENCLAVES OF VIOLENCE

## RACE AND HOMICIDE IN GREAT PLAINS CITIES, 1890-1920

CLARE V. MCKANNA JR.

Badly Shot in a Drunken Row.  
White Man and Colored Man "Mix" at Coffeyville.  
Three Shots Struck Home.  
*Montgomery Daily Reporter*, 14 January 1904

Killed by a Negro: Another Murder in Coffeyville's Tenderloin  
*Montgomery Daily Reporter*, 5 February 1907

KEY WORDS: Coffeyville, enclaves of violence, handgun, homicide, lynching, Omaha, Topeka

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These killings, occurring three years apart in Coffeyville, Kansas, offer bookend images of interracial homicides in the Great Plains. In the first shooting, Charles Vann, a black man and the victim, had been drinking at Walnut and Eleventh Streets in the "tenderloin" district, a black neighborhood in Coffeyville. This region, near the railroad yards, provided entertainment for black customers and occasionally whites in saloons, brothels, and gambling parlors. William Rodecker, a white male horse trader, had just arrived from Missouri and started drinking heavily in this area. About 8 P.M. Rodecker accosted Vann at the corner of Twelfth and Walnut Streets and began to "rag" him. Apparently, Vann took offense and allegedly put his hand on his hip pocket. Rodecker quickly pulled a .38 revolver and

fired four shots in quick succession, mortally wounding Vann.<sup>1</sup> In the second example, on 5 February 1907 Rodecker, just released from prison, became involved in an argument in the exact same area. Al Jesse (one of Vann's friends) pulled a revolver and shot Rodecker three times.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the killing of Rodecker occurred less than one block from the previous shooting.

These shootings typified violent behavior in Coffeyville at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since many men carried handguns, it is not surprising that violent confrontations often ended in death. Both homicides are especially significant because of the interracial factor. In the first case Rodecker, the white defendant, appeared before a justice of the peace and was quickly released on a five-hundred-dollar bond, and at a preliminary hearing the Montgomery County district attorney charged Rodecker with murder. Months later a jury found him guilty of manslaughter and a judge sentenced Rodecker from one to five years in prison.<sup>3</sup> In the second killing, despite the defendant pleading self-defense (both men had drawn their handguns), an all-white jury found Al Jesse guilty of second-degree murder; he received a twenty-year sentence.<sup>4</sup> These dramatic shootings provide historians with a window of opportunity to ask the question: how common were black homicides in Coffeyville, Topeka, and other eastern Kansas cities?

#### MEASURING BLACK VIOLENCE LEVELS

There is considerable literature on the black experience in Kansas. For example, Nell Painter and others have examined the black migration of the "Exodusters" who arrived to make a new life in rural Kansas after the Civil War. However, most of these studies deal with rural agricultural communities such as Nicodemus, Hodgeman, Morton City, and Parsons, which developed when blacks fled the South to escape mob violence, lynching, and discrimination.<sup>5</sup> Arriving in large numbers, blacks soon discovered that discrimination also existed in Kansas and Nebraska.

Thomas C. Cox and others have graphically described the black experience in cities such as Topeka, Wichita, and Parsons.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, there is a dearth of information on violent crime involving blacks in Kansas.

In the past few decades, social scientists and historians have collected data on violence among blacks in Miami, Philadelphia, Houston, and other urban centers.<sup>7</sup> Data reveal black homicide rates in 1980 reached 55 per 100,000 in Dallas, 77 in Cleveland, and 98 in Miami and were ten times higher than white rates.<sup>8</sup> The disparity between these two ethnic groups is remarkable. It is the thesis of this essay that such high rates for blacks is not of recent origin; the data will demonstrate that black homicide rates have been high for more than a century and can be traced to "enclaves of violence" that developed in Coffeyville and Topeka, Kansas, and Omaha, Nebraska.<sup>9</sup>

A variety of factors illuminate the development of black violence in Kansas and Nebraska cities. For example, the railroads that developed in these cities attracted hundreds of young blacks searching for steady employment. While Coffeyville and Topeka may have seemed to be tranquil to some observers, certain regions became "killing zones" for blacks who lived and worked in these cities. Alcohol also played an important role in violence levels. Railroad workers, meatpackers, and common laborers often spent their leisure hours in saloons, gambling parlors, and restaurants located near the railroad yards. Guns offer another part of the violence equation: cheap handguns, selling for less than three dollars, made their appearance during the 1880s and continued to flood the market well into the twentieth century. Finally, place provided the nexus where a variety of factors, such as the rapid, critical convergence of young men, guns, alcohol, and minor grievances, came together to create deadly "enclaves of violence."

This study focuses mainly on black homicides in four eastern Kansas counties during the period 1890 to 1920 but includes a comparison with Omaha, Nebraska. Labette, Leavenworth, Montgomery, and Shawnee Counties were

selected because of the presence of a significant black population. Leavenworth and Shawnee Counties, in northeastern Kansas, provide urban areas that offer a natural comparison with two rural counties. Although not large cities, Leavenworth and Topeka, Kansas (population between 20,000 and 50,000), offer an opportunity to examine the treatment of black defendants accused of homicide in an urban setting. These cities displayed a stable black population during the study period. Leavenworth County, with 4,465 blacks in 1890, declined to 3,780 by 1920 (10 percent of the total population), while Shawnee County's black population averaged 5,700 over the three decades (9.7 percent of the population).

Labette and Montgomery Counties, located in southeastern Kansas (bordering Oklahoma), provide a rural setting in which to assess the impact of black migration. Although the black population is smaller than in the urban counties, Montgomery County experienced significant growth, with the black population jumping from 947 in 1890 to 2,954 by 1920. This included in-migration of blacks who worked on three railroads that passed through Coffeyville. Neighboring Labette County's black population was 2,045 in 1890 and declined slightly over three decades to 1,980, suggesting a more stable environment in towns like Oswego and Parsons than in Coffeyville.

#### BLACK POPULATION MIGRATION

A series of push-pull factors explain the black in-migration to Kansas cities. Many blacks viewed southern police power as repressive and unjust and left to escape oppression. Police brutality was common in Richmond, Atlanta, and other cities, and this created unrest among southern urban blacks. Sometimes blacks resisted this form of violence, especially in Atlanta.<sup>10</sup> Lynchings also served as a push factor. For example, two historians discovered "a very striking relationship between migration and lynching in Georgia and South Carolina."<sup>11</sup> Pull factors such as job opportunities, better living conditions, and the absence of

blatant racial persecution contributed to the black migration to Kansas and Nebraska. Railroads especially offered job opportunities for blacks moving into Great Plains cities.

Coffeyville experienced social change that created problems during the early part of the twentieth century. Blacks began to migrate into Coffeyville slowly, numbering 803 in 1900, or about 16 percent of the total population. By 1910 the black population had jumped to 1,309 (10 percent) and finally to 1,480 by 1920 (9 percent). The 1900 census reveals that 84 percent of the black males in the black district that developed along the railroad yards had migrated from the South, with an additional 12 percent from western states. By 1910, 75 percent of the black males claimed the South as their birthplace.<sup>12</sup> The black neighborhood in Coffeyville became concentrated near the Missouri Pacific Railroad yards that extended along a corridor north to south for several blocks, paralleling Walnut Street. The pool halls, gambling parlors, saloons, and houses of prostitution were frequented not only by black patrons but also by whites.

Topeka also proved to be a popular destination for blacks, with 77 percent migrating from the South. The black population peaked in Topeka in 1890 with 5,037 persons (16 percent) and then declined to a low of 4,272 (8.5 percent) by 1920. By 1895, 42 percent of the blacks migrating into Topeka lived in the second ward, near the Missouri Pacific and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad yards.<sup>13</sup> Historian Thomas Cox noted that blacks employed by the Topeka Railway Company "were relegated to the most menial tasks"; however, black workers were more successful in finding jobs with the Kansas Pacific Railroad.<sup>14</sup> Despite discrimination in Topeka, blacks found employment in service-related businesses or operated their own barbershops, restaurants, and saloons. Cox found that "service businesses were most numerous, with barbers and caterers heading the list." Blacks usually had to settle for jobs as common laborers and they experienced blatant racism, such as signs stating "Negroes Need Not Apply" in Topeka factories.<sup>15</sup>



During their leisure hours some black workers leaving the railroad yards visited the saloons, gambling parlors, houses of prostitution, and pool halls nearby. Alcohol abuse created problems, and newspaper editors criticized excesses that brought crime to Topeka, especially prostitution. One editor suggested that such "women should be driven to the suburbs" and regulated "by a competent physician."<sup>16</sup> This enticing region, just west of the railroad yards, became a prominent gathering place for young blacks.

Omaha experienced similar pull factors. The Union Pacific Railroad, Union Stock Yards, and Cudahy, Armour, and Swift meat-packing companies offered job opportunities in Omaha. Blacks moved into the region west of the Union Pacific Railroad yards and some became involved in service-related businesses such as saloons, gambling parlors, pool halls, and brothels. By 1910 Omaha's red-light district became concentrated in a core of city blocks that extended from Davenport Street south three blocks to Douglas, and from Ninth Street west three blocks to Twelfth. Many saloons served as social gathering places for railroad and stockyard workers in this highly concentrated district. Local officials attributed any crime that occurred in this region to blacks who lived in and around it. Black newspaper editor H. J. Pinkett protested that disreputable saloons created problems for neighboring black residents. He ran several editorials calling for cleaning up of the "bootlegging and gambling joints" that seemed to be everywhere.<sup>17</sup>

#### ENCLAVES OF VIOLENCE

Coffeyville's "enclave of violence" developed in the Tenderloin district that ran north to south for four blocks along Walnut Street and extended eastward from the railroad yards four blocks. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad crossed Walnut Street at about the 1300 block and continued northeast on a parallel course. Virtually all of the homicides that were committed by blacks and that could be identi-

fied with a specific street location (eight cases) occurred along Walnut Street from the 1000 to 1300 blocks. This black neighborhood proved to be a killing zone for blacks in Coffeyville<sup>18</sup> (See Fig. 1).

For example, around 4 A.M. on 28 October 1902, Jess Brown and Frank Lee were sitting and playing poker in a gambling house at 1014 South Walnut Street. Apparently, Lee accused Brown of cheating, jumped up from the table, and threw the cards in Brown's face. Brown pulled a .44 Colt revolver and shot Lee through the heart. Police found a cocked .41 Colt revolver lying next to Lee; apparently he was too slow on the draw. Jess Brown was a well-respected black; Lee, however, appeared to be an unsavory character who had recently assaulted a police officer. A jury found Jess Brown not guilty.<sup>19</sup> In a similar case, on 7 June 1907, Thomas Clark and Frank Emerson became involved in a dispute about an obscene note that had been sent to Emerson's wife. Known locally as "Society Red," Emerson confronted Clark at about midnight at Maple and Thirteenth Streets near the railroad yards. After a heated argument, Emerson pulled a revolver and fired one fatal shot into his victim.<sup>20</sup>

White males sometimes became the victims of black assailants. In January 1917 Ed Brown, a white male, had been living with Lucille Jones, a black woman, at 1208 Beech Street. Brown became jealous of Simon Raines, Jones's seventeen-year-old nephew who also lived in the house. Apparently Brown had been abusing Lucille and threatened Raines with a butcher knife. Raines pulled a revolver and fired four shots, with three hitting their mark. Raines claimed self-defense; a jury agreed and found him not guilty.<sup>21</sup> Recent homicide studies reveal that assailants usually kill their victims in their own neighborhoods. Virtually all of the killings involving blacks in Coffeyville occurred in this black neighborhood along Walnut Street.

Topeka's "enclave of violence," commonly called "Smoky Row," was located in the second ward, south of the Kansas River and west of the railroad yards. Most of the killings took

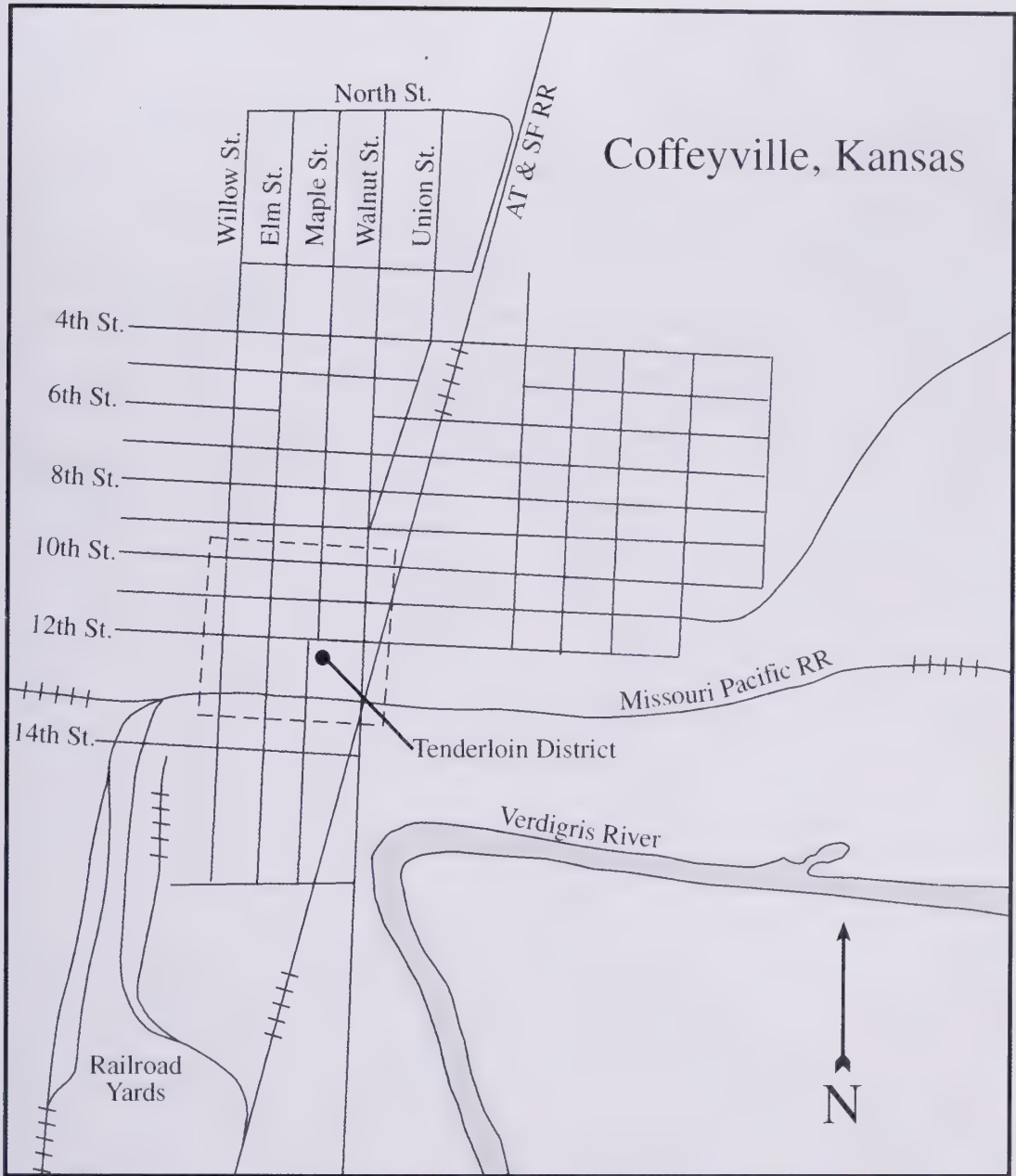


FIG. 1. Coffeyville, Kansas. Map by Melodie Tune.

place within a zone stretching from Crane Street south three blocks to Second Street and extending east from Van Buren four blocks to Monroe. Twelve homicides occurred within this small area, two others east of the railroad

yard, and six more a few blocks south in Tennesseetown, in the third ward<sup>22</sup> (See Fig. 2). Women rarely committed homicides, but there were exceptions. On 5 November 1899 Joanna Dupree became involved in an argument with

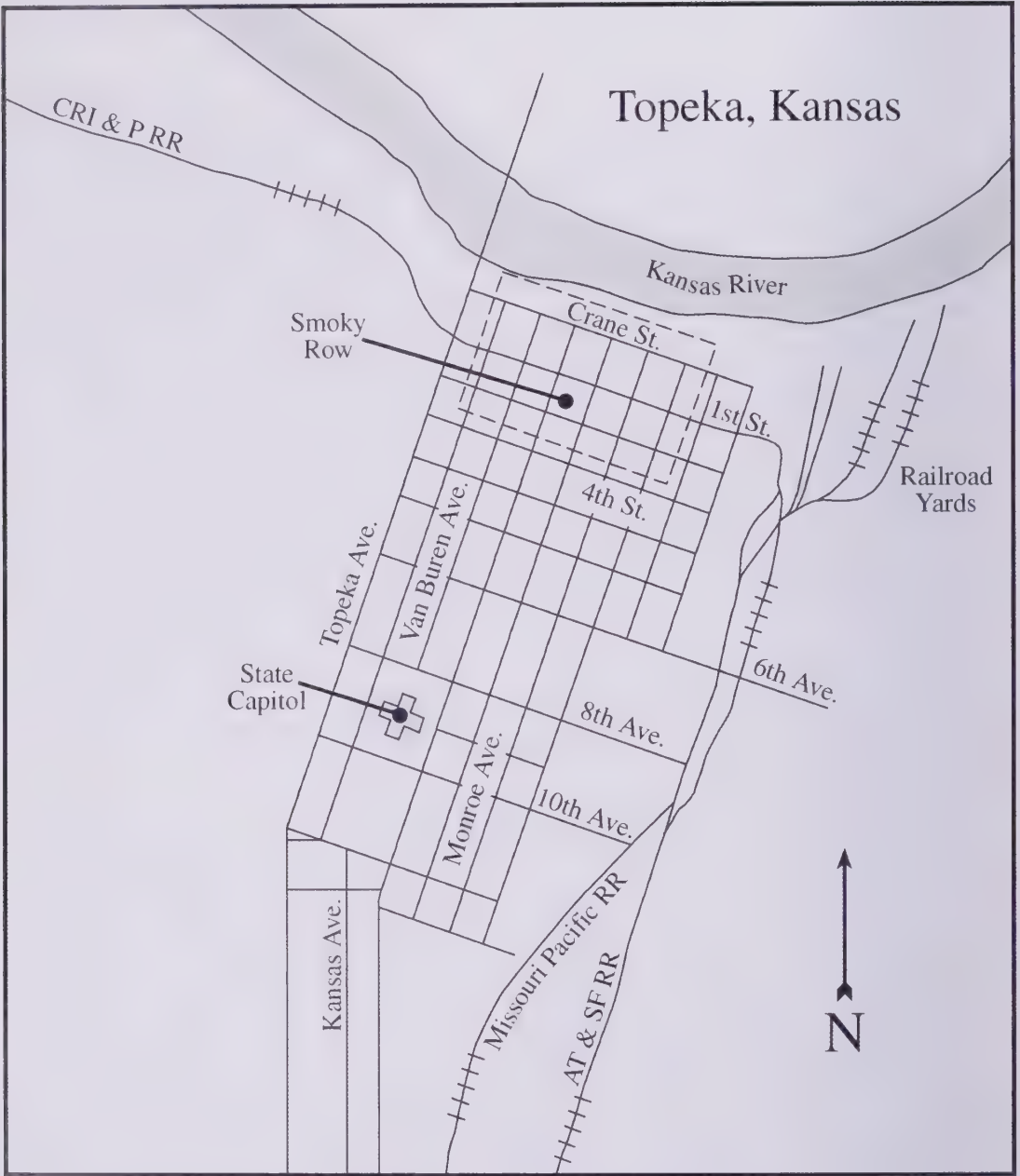


FIG. 2. Topeka, Kansas. Map by Melodie Tune.

Thomas "Red" Erwin on Smoky Row. Erwin, a tough talker, challenged Dupree: "If you can shoot any faster than I can, get your gun."<sup>23</sup> Dupree went back into her house, picked up a .41 Colt revolver, returned to the street, and

shot Erwin dead on the spot. Although she was indicted for murder, a jury found her not guilty.<sup>24</sup>

Young black males carried concealed weapons that proved to be an invitation to vio-



lence. For example, on 21 March 1900 Robert Smith, age eighteen, became involved in a dispute over a baseball that a group of boys had been playing with. William Richardson, age sixteen, took the ball and tried to leave. Smith pulled a revolver and shot Richardson in the face, killing him instantly.<sup>25</sup> Arguments over such trivial issues as a baseball or some other item of property and small bets often became deadly. In August 1904 Harvey Enoch stabbed Shadrack Simms to death in a crap game dispute in "Will Guy's Dive" on First Avenue and Monroe.<sup>26</sup> Nine years later James McCoy shot Clarence Sydnor in an argument in Sydnor's Pool Hall at 404 Kansas Street.<sup>27</sup> In 1915, in a fight over personal honor in an alley behind 218 Kansas Street, James Williamson shot Harry White three times because "he insulted my sister." A jury found Williamson guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced him to six to ten years in prison.<sup>28</sup> Finally, in 1915 Ada DuPree killed John Bronsema in a dispute over twenty-five cents on the corner of Monroe and Crane Streets. DuPree plea-bargained guilty to manslaughter.<sup>29</sup> Petty disputes, personal honor, concealed weapons, and alcohol proved to be deadly.

Omaha's "enclave of violence" developed in the region west of the Union Pacific Railroad center where most of the shootings involving blacks occurred. Omaha's unsegregated black neighborhood was the focal point of various racial groups; this accounts for the high interracial killings, with whites accounting for 32 percent of the victims of black assailants<sup>30</sup> (See Fig. 3). With killers and victims alike under the influence of liquor and well armed, minor disagreements often ended in violence.

Interracial homicides involving black assailants usually occurred in or around pool halls, gambling parlors, or saloons. Two interracial killings involving women suggest prostitution-related issues or the possibility of an insult. On the night of 27 July 1905, William Miles, a black male, stood talking to Florence Flick, a white woman, who had been living with him for two years. Recently, Harry McGechin, a

white man, had taken up with Flick. Miles and McGechin met in front of the Cambridge Hotel on the corner of Thirteenth and Capitol Streets and began to argue. Miles pulled a knife and quickly cut McGechin's throat; he died within minutes.<sup>31</sup> In a similar case, a black male known as Lucky Brown took offense to remarks made by three inebriated white men at Twenty-sixth and N Streets about a woman he was escorting. Brown pulled a pistol and fired several rounds that left one man dead. Police were unable to apprehend the killer.<sup>32</sup> These two cases display aspects of southern culture such as a heightened degree of personal honor. A careless comment, an unintended jostle on the street, or a gesture could bring a quick and deadly response from blacks conditioned by living in the South. Many black southerners had a strong sense of honor that dared not be sullied.

Sometime in 1908, Henry Brown, a black dining-car waiter for the Union Pacific Railroad, fought with Carrie Carter, a black woman who lived with him. After a bitter quarrel, she left him and moved into separate living quarters. Henry discovered her new residence and tried to convince her to return and live with him. She refused. On 8 February 1909, exasperated by her refusal, Brown visited a neighborhood pawnshop where he hocked his overcoat in exchange for a cheap handgun and a box of shells. He loaded the weapon and walked to Carrie's new residence at 1223 Capitol Avenue. After a brief argument in front of her house, Henry fired two shots, one of which struck her under the right arm, proving fatal. This scenario displays the ease with which individuals could obtain handguns in Omaha. It also indicates the single-mindedness and the premeditation of this killer; he pawned his overcoat in the dead of winter in exchange for a handgun.<sup>33</sup>

#### DISCUSSION OF DATA

Research uncovered 381 homicide indictments within the four Kansas counties. Despite population differences, rural Montgomery

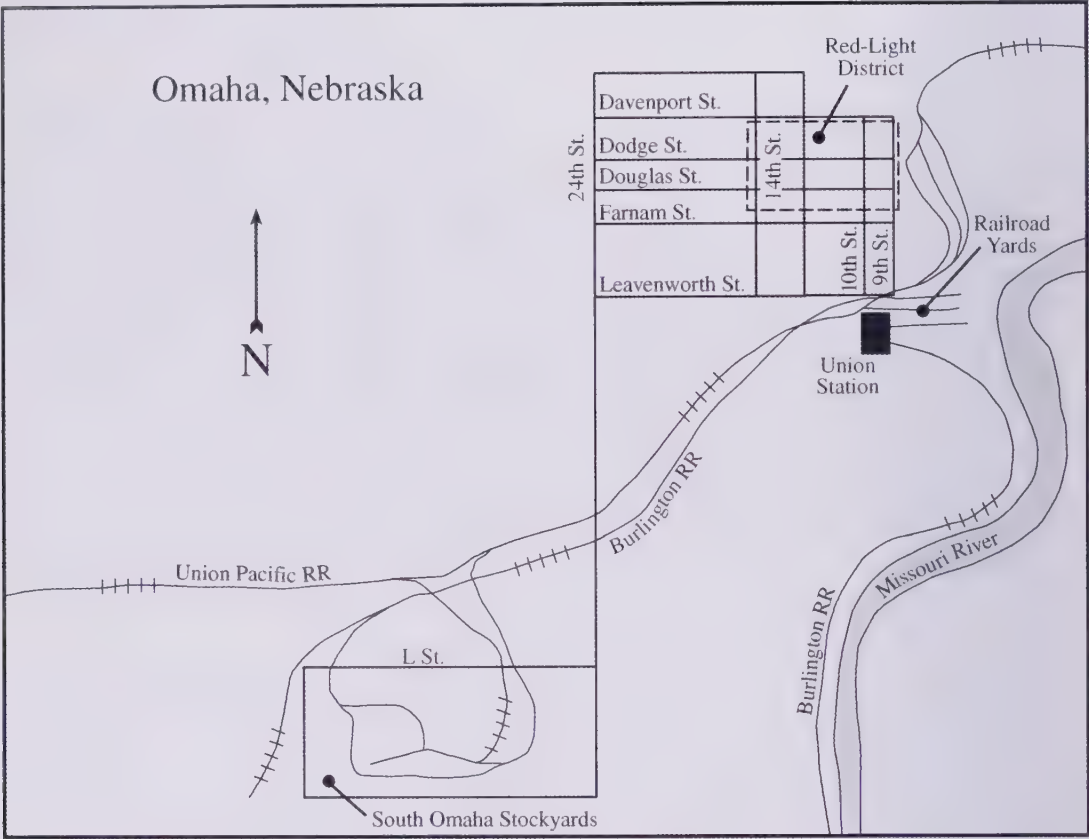


FIG. 3. Omaha, Nebraska. Map by Melodie Tune.

County had virtually the same number of homicide indictments as Shawnee County, which is dominated by urban Topeka (Table 1). This suggests that rural county homicide indictment rates sometimes mirror those of urban counties. Since indictment data were unavailable, the 162 cases in Leavenworth County reflect actual homicides taken from coroner's records.<sup>34</sup>

Coffeyville, with a modest black population, had a higher black homicide indictment rate than Topeka; however, both exhibited higher rates for blacks compared to whites. Coffeyville and Topeka proved to be the most dangerous homicide hot spots in these four Kansas counties. Coffeyville, with a population of 13,452 in 1920, recorded forty-four homicide indictments (sixteen blacks and twenty-eight whites). Topeka, with 50,022,

TABLE 1  
HOMICIDES/INDICTMENTS  
KANSAS AND NEBRASKA COUNTIES,  
1890-1920

County	1890-1920
Shawnee	91
Montgomery	90
Labette	38
Leavenworth	162
Douglas	237
Totals	618

Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets, Shawnee, Montgomery, and Labette counties and Coroner's Inquests, Leavenworth County and Douglas County, Nebraska, 1890-1920.

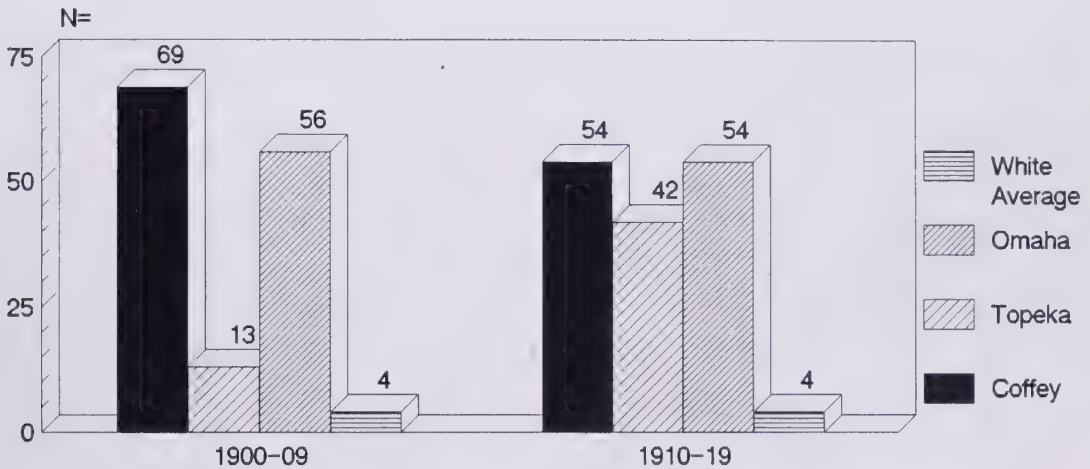


FIG. 4. Indictment rates per 100,000 black defendants in Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha, 1900-1919.

had fifty-six homicide indictments (thirty-one blacks and twenty-five whites). In Coffeyville and Topeka, with just 13 and 11 percent of the population, respectively, blacks contributed 36 and 55 percent of all homicide indictments. In Omaha, blacks received 37.5 percent of the homicide indictments but represented 7.6 percent of the total population. The transient nature of Coffeyville's black population and three railroads that enticed black workers into the region help to explain high violence levels. Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha had railroads, rapid population growth, and racial discrimination.<sup>35</sup> Equally important, high indictment rates for blacks may indicate a bias in the criminal justice systems. This was probably caused by a skewed accused/indicted ratio, meaning that blacks would more likely be indicted if accused of a crime, especially if they killed white victims. The accused/indicted ratio is the percentage of those individuals actually indicted selected from those who were identified and accused of murder.<sup>36</sup> Finally, lower black homicide indictment rates within Topeka may suggest a more stable society.

Black homicide indictment rates for 1900-1909 were 69 per 100,000 population for Coffeyville, 13 per 100,000 for Topeka, and 56 per 100,000 for Omaha (Fig. 4). The rates

for 1910-1919 remain high, with 54, 42, and 54 per 100,000, respectively, for Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha. White homicide indictment rates during this period averaged 4 per 100,000 in all three cities. Black homicide indictment rates exceeded white rates by a factor of ten or more. These Great Plains cities, however, were not the only ones that displayed such disparate figures; Roger Lane discovered similar high rates among blacks in Philadelphia.<sup>37</sup>

The black homicide indictment rates for Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha have seldom been equaled except in some modern cities during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>38</sup> Critics might complain that Coffeyville, with sixteen cases, is too small a sample to be reliable compared with the much larger population in Omaha, with sixty-five cases. However, statistics reveal that if you were a black male living in Coffeyville, your chances of being killed would be higher than if you lived in Omaha. Sixteen of 1,309 blacks were killed in Coffeyville compared to thirty-one out of 4,538 in Topeka, and sixty-five victims out of 5,143 blacks in Omaha. Blacks were also at risk in Leavenworth and Independence.

Following trends discovered in earlier studies, handguns played an important role; blacks



selected handguns to commit their homicides 65 percent of the time, while whites chose them 53 percent of the time. Blacks usually selected handguns patterned on the Webley British Bulldog double-action revolver (patented in 1883), probably because they were cheap. This model, with a two- or three-inch barrel, allowed for easy concealment in a coat pocket. American arms manufacturers copied this design and produced large quantities of the five-shot revolvers in several sizes, including .38 and .32 calibers. In the 1880s, the Iver Johnson Arms Company named its versions the American Bull Dog and Boston Bull Dog. The Harrington and Richardson Company, noted for making "Suicide Specials," switched to a similar design. Forehand and Wadsworth, Remington, Stevens, and other American gun manufacturers also produced similar guns. These cheap handguns sold for less than three dollars.<sup>41</sup>

The combined population of the four Kansas counties reached 191,253 in 1920, compared to a population of 204,524 in Douglas County, Nebraska. Three of these Kansas counties had a combined total of 219 homicide indictments, and Leavenworth County had 162 homicides, compared to 237 indictments and 391 actual homicides in Douglas County, Nebraska between 1880-1920. Previous research suggests that if coroners' inquest records had been available, the actual homicides would have been approximately 25 percent higher, or about 436 homicides for the four counties.

Convictions rates in the four Kansas counties offer a similar pattern to those discovered earlier in Omaha, where 84 percent of black defendants were found guilty. Black defendant conviction rates reached 86 percent in Shawnee County and averaged 77 percent in Labette and Montgomery Counties.<sup>40</sup> White defendant conviction rates were 52 percent in Labette and Shawnee Counties and 43 percent in Montgomery County, compared to 37 percent in Omaha. Black defendant plea bargain rates were 41, 31, and 12 percent, respectively, in Shawnee, Labette, and Montgomery Counties, while Omaha had a plea bargain rate

of 32 percent. Whites rarely plea bargained in either state.<sup>41</sup> The data reveal that blacks were especially at risk in these Great Plains cities.

#### FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In his discussion of a "regional culture of violence," Raymond Gastil used the term "southernness" to help identify the persistence of southern culture in transplanted members of black society who moved to other regions such as the Great Plains cities of Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha. They carried with them their cultural tradition that included a propensity to settle problems, especially those involving "honor," with force that often could be lethal. Gastil established high correlations of southernness with blacks and high homicide rates.<sup>42</sup> This supports an earlier study on black crime in Philadelphia by W.E.B. DuBois.<sup>43</sup> Many years later, Roger Lane, in his discussion of blacks in Philadelphia, suggested that "a different social psychology resulting from blacks' exclusion from the dominant experience with factory, bureaucracy, and schooling; a heritage of economic and other insecurities; and a long and complex experience with criminal activity" best explain black crime.<sup>44</sup> One is left with the conclusion that blacks brought their proclivity for violence with them when they left the South and moved into Kansas and Nebraska.

As noted earlier, in 1904 William Rodecker killed Charles Vann, a black patron in front of a saloon in Coffeyville. Three years later, just released from prison, Rodecker returned to Coffeyville's black neighborhood and was shot by Al Jesse, one of Vann's friends. Not surprisingly, both shootings occurred within this "enclave of violence." Authorities had sentenced Rodecker, a white man with a history of violence, to five years in prison, while Jesse received a harsher sentence. Black defendants paid a higher price in the criminal justice system, especially if they killed white victims.<sup>45</sup> These killings reveal the problems that many blacks faced in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Kansas and Nebraska.

Whether in Montgomery, Labette, Shawnee, Leavenworth, or Douglas County, young black males were at risk.

There are a series of factors that tie the homicides of Vann and Rodecker and many of the other killings together: gender, race, alcohol, guns, and place. First, most of the victims were men: 86 percent of all homicide victims in Kansas and 90 percent in Nebraska. These killings usually involved two young males arguing over a grievance such as a fifty-cent pool hall bet, an affront of honor, or a woman. These affairs often escalated into deadly violence. Although ranging in age from eighteen to sixty, the majority were men in their twenties and thirties.

People usually kill within their own ethnic group, but there were exceptions; race played an important role in interracial killings such as the Walker, Vann, Rodecker, and Jesse cases. In fact, 32 percent of the black killings in Omaha involved white victims. In the Kansas counties, blacks killed white victims 19 percent of the time. Kansas and Nebraska were the recipients of an ethnically diverse population that included blacks, Hispanics, and other whites. And, of course, ethnic minorities were treated differently by a criminal justice system that favored the white majority who controlled it; sheriffs, jury members, attorneys, and judges came mainly from white society.

Alcohol provides another strong connection among these homicide cases, as many of the young men, both victims and killers, had been drinking. Railroad workers, merchants, and common laborers gathered in saloons, gambling parlors, and brothels in Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha for entertainment, especially at night and on weekends. In Omaha, 75 percent of the killers had been drinking, while in the four Kansas counties an average of 71 percent had been.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, alcohol became a catalyst for violence. Although not a causal factor, alcohol consumption tended to reduce inhibitions and sometimes made young men reckless.

Guns bind these murders together as well, with most killers selecting cheap handguns to

commit their crimes. Kansas and Nebraska, like much of the American West, developed a strong gun culture. Anyone could carry a small revolver, enter a saloon, have a few drinks, and if challenged, draw and use it to settle any real or imagined grievance. Black assailants in these Kansas counties used handguns 65 percent of the time to kill their victims, while 75 percent of the black killers in Omaha used them. The carrying of handguns ensured that physical confrontations would often be deadly. Victims of assaults with knives, blunt instruments, and fists had a better chance of surviving than those shot with firearms. By their very nature, guns were more lethal. If the victim survived the initial shock of being shot, infection remained a great danger due to the nature of the wound. Doctors were ill equipped to deal with the effects of shock and trauma associated with gunshot wounds, especially the massive trauma caused by abdominal gunshot wounds, which often led to peritonitis. Consequently, most shootings were fatal.<sup>47</sup>

Place also played an important role. Because of labor shortages, railroad companies enticed black workers to move to Coffeyville, Topeka, and Omaha. This new, fluid, transient black population was essential to the economic success of railroads and other industries in these cities. Blacks migrating from the South established their own neighborhoods, including saloons, pool halls, and gambling houses near the railroad yards and factories. Virtually all of the black homicides occurred within these enclaves where young male patrons, black and white, intermingled.

Finally, in evaluating the data, one can distinguish a well-defined pattern of interaction among minor disputes, alcohol, and heavily armed men. This *modus operandi*, coupled with the critical convergence of a young, ethnically diverse, and transient male population into these cities, explains high homicide levels. It is also possible that other Kansas counties would reveal similar violent patterns to those shown in this study.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, the factors of gender, race, alcohol, guns, and place assured that these cities would develop

"enclaves of violence" that would be deadly for young blacks who were, ironically, fleeing the South to escape injustice in the courts and white violence.<sup>49</sup>

## NOTES

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1. *Montgomery Daily Reporter*, 14 January 1904.
2. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1907.
3. *People v. William Rodecker*, 30 January 1904, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Montgomery County, Kans., County Clerk, Independence, Kans.
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9. H. C. Brearley, *Homicide in the United States* (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith, 1932), pp. 218-19. During the period 1920-1925, Brearley discovered that black homicide rates had reached 87, 99, and 101 per 100,000, respectively, for Kansas City (Kans.), Dallas, and Cleveland. Also see Clare V. McKanna Jr., "Seeds of Destruction: Homicide, Race, and Justice in Omaha, 1880-1920," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14 (fall 1994): 65-90.

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11. Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, "Black Flight: Lethal Violence and the Great Migration, 1900-1930," *Social Science History* 14 (fall 1990): 360-61.

12. A 20 percent random sample of heads of black household was collected for this study. See US Bureau of Census, 1900 and 1910, *Twelfth Census: Population, Thirteenth Census: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1901, 1911). Kansas, Montgomery County, Coffeyville.

13. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka* (note 6 above), pp. 203-8.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 87 and 90-93.

16. *Daily Capital* undated, as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 107.

17. *Omaha Monitor*, 19 April and 17 August 1919.

18. *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, 1890-1920, Montgomery County, County Clerk, Independence, Kans.

19. *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, 29 October 1902, and *People v. Brown*, 21 November 1902, *ibid.*



20. *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, 11 June 1907. A jury found Emerson guilty of manslaughter, see *People v. Emerson*, 24 October 1907, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Montgomery County.

21. *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, 12 January 1917, and *People v. Raines*, 13 February 1917, *ibid.*

22. The location of an additional eleven homicides remains undetermined. See *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, 1890-1920, Shawnee County, County Clerk, Topeka, Kans.

23. *Topeka Daily Capital*, 9 November 1899.

24. *People v. DuPree*, 25 November 1899, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Shawnee County.

25. *Topeka Daily Capital*, 22 March 1900, and *People v. Smith*, 4 April 1900, *ibid.* Smith plea bargained guilty to second-degree murder.

26. *People v. Enochs*, 20 September 1904, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Shawnee County. Enochs plea bargained to manslaughter and received a sentence of five years in prison.

27. *People v. McCoy*, 5 May 1913, *ibid.* McCoy plea bargained to second-degree murder and received a ten-year sentence.

28. *People v. Williamson*, 19 February 1916, *ibid.*

29. *People v. DuPree*, 29 September 1915, *ibid.*

30. McKanna, "Seeds of Destruction" (note 9 above), p. 71.

31. *Omaha World-Herald*, 28 July 1905, and *People v. Miles*, 2 August 1905, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Douglas County, County Clerk, Omaha, Nebr. Convicted of manslaughter, Miles received a five-to-ten-year sentence.

32. *Omaha World-Herald*, 16 August 1913.

33. *Ibid.*, 9 February 1909. *People v. Brown*, 26 April 1909, *Criminal Appearance Dockets*, Douglas County, Nebr. Convicted of first-degree murder, Brown received a life sentence and was paroled in 1929.

34. Coroner's records were unavailable for Shawnee, Montgomery, and Labette Counties.

35. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka* (note 6 above), pp. 92-93; and McKanna, "Seeds of Destruction" (note 9 above), pp. 68-69.

36. The accused/indicted ratio could not be calculated because of the unavailability of coroner's records in Labette, Montgomery, and Shawnee Counties and indictment records in Leavenworth County. Similar research in California has revealed a significant disparity, with authorities indicting accused Indians 82 percent compared to whites with 46 percent. See Clare V. McKanna Jr., *Race and Homicide in Nineteenth-Century California* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002), p. 100.

37. Roger Lane, *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 142-43. Another earlier study indicates that homicide rates for blacks in urban ar-

reas continued to be high during the 1920s, with Nebraska's urban black homicide rates (mainly Omaha) reaching 69 in 1920 and 1925, while Kansas black rates in Kansas City and Leavenworth, respectively, were 87 and 31 per 100,000. See H. C. Brearley, *Homicide in the United States* (1932; reprint, Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith, 1969), pp. 99 and 218. Brearley used actual homicides, rather than indictments, collected from federal government statistics.

38. For other comparisons see Rose and McClain, *Race, Place, and Risk* (note 7 above); Zahn, "Homicide" (note 7 above), pp. 111-32; Wilbanks, *Murder in Miami* (note 7 above); and Wolfgang, *Patterns in Criminal Homicide* (note 7 above), pp. 361-83.

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47. David McDowall, "Firearm Availability and Homicide Rates in Detroit, 1951-1986," *Social Forces* 69 (June 1991): 1085-1101; and Gary Kleck

and Karen McElrath, "The Effects of Weaponry on Human Violence," *Social Forces* 69 (March 1991): 669-92.

48. During my 1997 research trip to Kansas, I collected partial data in Cherokee County that revealed 94 homicide indictments; 27 percent were black defendants. Conviction rates for blacks

reached 95 percent and 21 percent plea bargained. See also Wyandotte (Kansas City), Atchison (Atchison), Douglas (Lawrence), Sedgwick (Wichita), and Crawford (Pittsburg) Counties; they also had significant pockets of black population.

49. Tolnay and Beck, "Black Flight" (note 11 above), p. 354.

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# WILLA CATHER'S RELUCTANT NEW WOMAN PIONEER

REGINALD DYCK

In 1913 Willa Cather created a female protagonist who is single, independent, entrepreneurial, managerial, strong willed, wealthy and in love with the land of south-central Nebraska. This character offered a new vision for women at the turn of the twentieth century. Cather's fictional construction of gender, as well as her own experience, embody the contradictions present in the roles society offered women. One can read *O Pioneers!* as a cultural seismometer, one that picks up tremors along

various social fault lines and then expresses them within a particular framework held by many people of her economic and social position. This essay focuses on the social forces that intersect to shape Cather's fictional constructions of gender.

Although Cather set much of her early work on the Nebraska prairie where she grew up, as an adult she resided in Pittsburgh and New York, working as an editor, journalist, critic, teacher, and writer. Characteristic of the New Woman, she gained a university education, chose not to marry, entered a profession, and rose to a position of considerable importance as managing editor of *McClure's*, a leading magazine of the time. She regularly traveled back to Nebraska and to other rural places, yet she also often went to Europe for business and pleasure. Because Cather's allegiances were mixed, as they were for many in the developing middle class, the culture of urban sophistication as well as rural developments on the Divide shaped her presentation of pioneer life in *O Pioneers!*

Written at a time of rapid industrialization and urbanization, Cather's first Nebraska novel reflects the uneasiness its readers felt toward

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changing U.S. culture. Stories of the pioneer past were reassuring to them. However, Cather's pioneer was not typical. Her protagonist is a woman, not a farmwife but a farm manager. Along with her rural attachment to the land, Alexandra shared with her author many qualities of the economically independent, professional New Woman emerging in the urban East. While threatening to her brothers and their wives, Alexandra gains the readers' sympathy. Yet the conflicts between competing definitions of gender roles and Alexandra's relationship to the land are not comfortably reconciled for Cather's reluctant New Woman pioneer, whose farming success is balanced by her personal losses.

#### THE COUNTRY IN TRANSITION

In the early years of the twentieth century, middle-class culture, and Cather herself, was in many ways antimodern, "a complex blend of *accommodation* and *protest*" against "a complacent faith in progress." T. J. Jackson Lears, in his preface to *No Place of Grace*, goes on to explain, "What [literary] critics call modernism and what I call antimodernism share common roots in the *fin-de-siecle* yearnings for *authentic experience*—physical, emotional, or spiritual."<sup>1</sup>

Undermining that experience, many complained, was an emerging society characterized by "industrial progress, rationalization, reorganization of production and administration along more efficient lines, electricity, the assembly line, parliamentary democracy, and cheap newspapers."<sup>2</sup> While enjoying their own and their country's new accomplishments and power, many middle-class citizens had doubts about the effect these changes were having on the character of its newly prosperous members. In the same year that *O Pioneers!* was published, Henry Ford established his first assembly line, which fragmented and depersonalized production. As John D. Rockefeller baldly stated, "Individualism has gone, never to return."<sup>3</sup> Also,

Technological change isolated the urban bourgeoisie from the hardness of life on the land; an interdependent and increasingly corporate economy circumscribed autonomous will and choice.<sup>4</sup>

Many urban professionals looked to some form of "the strenuous life" as an antidote. Theodore Roosevelt called them to "that highest form of success which comes . . . to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph."<sup>5</sup> For many, this meant a return to the wilderness. *The Boy Scouts of America: A Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life-craft*, published in 1910 and selling seven million copies in the next thirty years,<sup>6</sup> defined for boys and their parents both the problem and the solution:

We have lived to see an unfortunate change. Partly through the growth of immense cities, with the consequent specialization of industry, so that each individual has been required to do one small specialty and shut his eyes to everything else, with the resultant perpetual narrowing of the mental horizon. . . . I should like to lead the whole nation into the way of living outdoors for at least a month each year.<sup>7</sup>

Most Americans, of course, did not choose to spend a month in the woods but instead attempted to live such a life vicariously. In 1903 Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* became "an immediate best-seller and thirty years later it still ranked as the seventh most widely read American novel of the time." The story's message was clear: civilization enervated its inhabitants; a return to the wild offered the dog Buck, and by implication humans as well, a more authentic life.<sup>8</sup> Models for finding this life were readily available, at least imaginatively, by looking to the part of the country generally understood to be least affected by modern civilization. Although the western frontier of free and open land was officially

closed, historian Frederick Jackson Turner had created a memorial to it in his frontier thesis. His conceptual strategy of cutting off the heroic past from the diminished present—by emphasizing difference and loss—was not uncommon. Celebrations of passing pioneer virtues were part of a common jeremiad against the emerging mass, industrial society.

The immigrants of Nebraska provided Cather her alternative. Published a decade after *O Pioneers!*, Cather's essay "Nebraska" demonstrates her attitude in a hardened form as she uses Turner's discursive strategy of dividing past from present. The essay opens with a description of the land as pioneer Nebraska's foundational characteristic and then describes the climate. When history is finally addressed, the essay emphasizes its lack: the frontier has just recently passed but old values remained. In early days "this newest part of the New World" offered little room for "the pale proprieties, the insincere conventional optimism of our art and thought." Pioneers were not "stamped with the ugly crest of materialism."<sup>9</sup>

#### A NEW PIONEER

Cather's protagonist in *O Pioneers!*, Alexandra Bergson, can be seen as an example of the Turnerian pioneer. She has the imagination to envision the land's potential as well as the "strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind" to implement her vision.<sup>10</sup> Examples include her determination to remain on the Divide during times of depression and her experimentation with silos, new crops, and new ways of raising hogs. The novel's 1913 readers would find this character an inspiring antithesis to the modern urban figure trapped in a world of conformity and enervation. Yet she is a *woman* pioneer, and Turner always used the pronoun "he." Pioneering meant conquering to Turner, not an occupation for women as he and much of his culture envisioned them. But if Alexandra does not fit the commonly held image of the frontier hero because of her sex,

neither does she represent the historical experience of women on the frontier. For one thing, remaining single was not economically viable for rural women. The Homestead Act of 1862 did allow single women to gain their own land, and especially after 1900 they did participate. However, for most women the land was an investment "that would improve their prospects for marriage."<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Alexandra's extensive landholdings keep Carl from marrying her and make her brothers wary of suitors because of potential loss to their children's inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

Since almost all rural women married, they were a part of nuclear families whose structure and organization "channeled the flow of goods and services in a manner that isolated and weakened rural women."<sup>13</sup> Women on the frontier adjusted to new conditions and did accept new positions temporarily, but they maintained their largely domestic role in serving others rather than themselves, thus following the pattern of the nineteenth-century ideal.<sup>14</sup>

There is no doubt that numerous women worked in fields, helped with cattle round-ups and drives, and aided in running inns and other family businesses. . . . But in almost every case, the primary focus of women's lives, whether they were married or single, was supposed to be, and usually was, domestic.<sup>15</sup>

Challenging these expectations was not easy: "Women who resisted . . . usually encountered pervasive social controls, which enforced traditional rules. Women who emulated men . . . were seen as odd and deviant."<sup>16</sup> Consequently, women seldom permanently took on male roles.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Alexandra's career as an unmarried farm owner and manager would have been a historical anomaly as well as a contradiction of the Turnerian myth. Further explanation is needed: Cather's own experiences, in the urban East as well as rural Nebraska, combined to shape her presentation of the novel's protagonist.



FIG. 1. The Chrisman sisters on a claim in Goheen settlement on Lieban (Lillian) Creek, Custer County, Nebraska. These daughters of ranchman Joseph M. Chrisman took homesteads, timber claims, and preemption claims in the Goheen Settlement. Pictured from left to right are Harriet, Elizabeth, Lucie, and Ruth. Courtesy of the Solomon D. Butcher Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society Photograph Collections.

#### CATHER, ALEXANDRA, AND THE NEW WOMAN

Willa Cather experienced pioneer life at a distance. Her grandparents, the first Cathers who migrated to Nebraska, arrived in 1873. Free land having run out, they purchased their homestead from the railroad and, like many pioneers, started out living in dugout. Coming a decade later (and two decades after the opening setting of her novel), Willa, her family, and a servant

arrived in comparative luxury. They didn't spend their first night, as her Aunt Franc did a few years earlier, in a tent which burnt

down in a sudden prairie fire. They were not going to live in a cave in the ground, and they had not had to cross Nebraska . . . in a "prairie schooner." . . . The railroads had made all the difference.<sup>18</sup>

The Divide was becoming a settled agricultural region; the frontier existed mainly in the memory of older inhabitants. Deciding to leave the farm in 1884 after less than eighteen months, Cather's father, Charles, auctioned off his stock and equipment but kept ownership of the land and continued to add to his holdings.

When the family moved to Red Cloud, a county seat with a population of about 1,200,



the Burlington Railroad was bringing eight passenger trains to town each day. The main street, running for several blocks, could boast of the state bank, an opera house, stores, and offices. One office belonged to Charles Cather, who made farm loans as well as sold real estate and insurance.<sup>19</sup> Although Cather often rode around the countryside on horseback or in her doctor friend's carriage, talking especially with the women she met, her personal experience was considerably different from these immigrant pioneers. Her family's life in Red Cloud was comfortably middle class. This experience prepared her to follow the largely urban pattern of the New Woman, who was emerging as Cather was growing up.

In explaining this "revolutionary demographic and political phenomenon" that emerged in the 1880s, historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg includes Cather as an example of "the single, highly educated, economically autonomous New Woman," who as

a member of the affluent new bourgeoisie, most frequently a child of small-town America, *she felt herself a part of the grass roots of her country*. Her quintessentially American identity, her economic resources, and her social standing permitted her to defy proprieties, pioneer new roles, and *still insist upon a rightful place within the genteel world*.<sup>20</sup>

Just as Cather's construction of the frontier in *O Pioneers!* was shaped in reaction to the "incorporation of America," so her choice of protagonist was shaped by the new cultural conditions some women were then experiencing. In her novel Cather could embody that two-sided identity of the New Woman, "grass roots" and yet "genteel," because her immigrant characters are not "huddled masses yearning to be free" but educated émigrés who brought with them rich, sophisticated cultures.

In 1894, when Cather was studying at the University of Nebraska along with working as a journalist and critic, an article in "the *North American Review* introduced the term 'New

Woman' into popular sexual and social policies." It quickly became part of the "polyphonic" debates over femininity at the time.<sup>21</sup> What was clear, whether one approved or not, was that the New Woman challenged "existing gender relations and the distribution of power."<sup>22</sup> In guarded ways, Cather embodies this debate in Alexandra's struggle for authority. The novel's protagonist reflects the outlook of the burgeoning feminist movement, which in 1913 was "mark[ing] a new phase in thinking about women's emancipation."<sup>23</sup> When *O Pioneers!* was published that year, some reviews recognized the connection. McClure's, of which Cather had been managing editor, published a strong review that described Alexandra as "triumphant womanhood . . . with the daring and confidence of one who carries a new message." While the *New York Times Book Review* critically noted that "[p]ossibly some might call it a feminist novel," the *Sewanee Review* approvingly stated that "subtly the feminist theme is made prominent."<sup>24</sup> Clearly this was a new novel for Cather, as she herself explained, but not only because it is set in Nebraska and written in a new voice. It had a new protagonist who reflected the changing times.

Alexandra's struggle for authority focuses on her confrontation with her brothers Lou and Oscar, who show no willingness to relinquish male privilege and power. To them a single woman has the social position of a child, someone incapable of making good decisions—wanting to marry Carl was a clear example—and having no property rights. As Oscar states emphatically, "The property of the family really belongs to the men of the family" (220).

In this argument, Lou and Oscar appeal to nature, that is, to the Victorian construction of gender as it had been naturalized. In their minds, men and women are fundamentally different; therefore, they should participate in separate spheres. This idea had cultural and scientific standing at the time. "The womb, doctors emphasized, dominated a woman's mental as well as physical life, producing a weak, submissive, uncreative, emotional, intuitive, and

generally inferior personality."<sup>25</sup> From her brothers' perspective, Alexandra's owning and running a farm was unnatural, in spite of her obvious success (221). Challenging this, Alexandra appeals to society as embodied in its legal system when arguing against her brothers' appeal to nature. She claims control over her land because she has a deed. This conflict over the basis of authority engages an important cultural debate of the time.

Related to the gender-based argument about landownership that Lou and Oscar have with Alexandra is these men's belief about the nature of work. For them the family's success in farming was the result of physical labor, "real work," and not Alexandra's "manag[ing] around" (220). They claim to have humored Alexandra by ostensibly letting her run the farm, but she should not think that the work of farming is anything but physical. However, in not having the heroine herself actually work the land, the novel rejects this populist view and marks a major social shift taking place.<sup>26</sup>

The rise of . . . people who neither grew something from the land nor created something with their hands . . . but managed . . . was as apparent as was the corporation as the ascendant business entity.<sup>27</sup>

Fewer people were creating a complete product or growing a crop, and more were manipulating abstractions by doing paperwork. While this new "feminization" of work presented opportunities for the New Woman, it created anxieties for those like Lou and Oscar who define themselves by traditional masculine constructions of gender, which equated physical work with natural superiority. Not surprisingly, Theodore Roosevelt shared their fear in his call for "the strenuous life" as an act of recovery: "when men fear work . . . when women fear motherhood, they tremble on the brink of doom."<sup>28</sup> This echoes Turner's concern for the American character at the closing of the frontier.

Because of these anxieties, only the novel's male characters who are on the cultural mar-

gins, Carl and Ivar, can appreciate Alexandra and resist definitions of gender that emphasize difference. Yet even their resistance is contained. For example, as an artist, Carl can understand Alexandra while her brothers cannot; however, Carl struggles to adjust to new gender relations and admits his failure: "'What a hopeless position you are in, Alexandra!' he exclaimed feverishly. 'It is your fate to be always surrounded by little men. And I am no better than the rest'" (227).

As a result, Alexandra remains unmarried throughout most of the novel. She escapes the dependent position of most rural women of the time and instead follows the pattern of the urban New Woman who, like Cather herself, commonly chose not to marry because she had economic independence as a professional. Forty to sixty percent of women who graduated from college from the 1870s through the 1920s did not marry, while only ten percent of all American women did not.<sup>29</sup> Although Alexandra does not have the education or urban location of these graduates, she does share their economic self-sufficiency, marital status, and professional or managerial work.<sup>30</sup> In creating this character, Cather overlays particular eastern urban qualities on her western rural pioneer protagonist.<sup>31</sup>

"The marriage question was central to most discussions" of the New Woman. "To place a woman outside of a domestic setting, to train a woman to think and feel 'as a man,' to encourage her to succeed at a career, indeed to place a career before marriage, violated virtually every late-Victorian norm."<sup>32</sup> Most writers advocating for new gender roles "were not opposed to marriage. Rather, they believed that it should be constituted on entirely different terms."<sup>33</sup> As *O Pioneers!* makes clear, that is what Alexandra wants as well. Cather draws back from completely rejecting traditional marriage norms; she does not put Alexandra in the position of choosing to rebel by remaining single. As Alexandra admits to both Carl and her brother Emil, she has had a lonely life (224, 290). Her marital status is a price she must pay for her independence.

When attacked by Lou and Oscar, Alexandra defends herself by telling them, "I certainly did n't [*sic*] choose to be the kind of girl I was" (221). Because she is a reluctant New Woman pioneer, her career is less threatening to readers with traditional values. Alexandra is not depicted as the selfish and "unnatural" person that critics of the New Woman decried.<sup>34</sup> For example, Alexandra states that she has fulfilled her father's mandate to not "lose the land" (150) in order to improve the lives of her brothers. In this response she assumes the traditional role of caretaker.

#### THE PRICE OF INDEPENDENCE

These aspects that make Alexandra less threatening also mark the price she pays for being a New Woman in a transitional, but still quite traditional, rural society. In a number of other ways Cather also acknowledges the cost Alexandra pays for rejecting social mores.

[P]atriarchal culture repays Alexandra's trespass by isolating her and thus injuring her ability to express her emotions and her sexuality. . . . Alexandra's isolation deprives her of a self-image commensurate to the strongly sexual nature revealed to the reader.<sup>35</sup>

Reflecting culturally influenced doubts about her new female role, Alexandra says to her brothers, "If you take even a vine and cut it back again and again, it grows hard, like a tree" (221). A lover only comes to her as part of a recurring dream, and after the encounter Alexandra would scrub herself and then rinse with cold well water (238). These images of repressed sexuality suggest another aspect of Alexandra's character that Cather made safe for traditional middle-class readers.<sup>36</sup>

Cather gives Alexandra the fate of associating with no man, except in her fantasy, strong enough to marry a nontraditional woman. Carl accepts Alexandra, but as noted earlier, he is unable to compromise his practice of masculinity in order to marry her (227). Alexandra's

independence also affects her relationship with women. In presenting her brothers' wives as caricatures of conspicuous consumption, the author makes common ground impossible. Rather than taking an independent woman farmer as a role model for themselves or their daughters, these women conform to conventional, small-town, middle-class expectations.<sup>37</sup> While this hardly seems like a significant loss for Alexandra, it does heighten the isolation she experiences.

Her relationship with Marie, her closest friend, is more complex. Marie enters the novel as a little girl playing the traditional female role of graciously accepting men's admiration (143). Her continuing to play this role throughout the novel creates one of the limitations in Alexandra and Marie's relationship.<sup>38</sup> Alexandra does not discuss with Marie her relationship with Carl or her conflict with her brothers: "an instinct told her that about such things she and Marie would not understand one another" (229). And Alexandra certainly does not discuss her sexual fantasies. In this regard, Alexandra is again like her historical counterparts: "The frankness and daring of the New Woman were more fancied than real."<sup>39</sup> When Marie wants to open her heart about marriage frustrations, Alexandra abruptly changes the subject. "No good, she reasoned, ever came from talking about such things" (234). Marie wants to establish "the female world of love and ritual"<sup>40</sup> characteristic of many women's friendships of the nineteenth century, but Alexandra has crossed traditional gender boundaries in ways that make that world no longer available. As Marie's relationship with both her husband, Frank, and her lover, Emil, shows, she establishes her identity as a woman by emphasizing gender differences; Alexandra gains a position of power by challenging that construction of gender. As a result, Marie is a farmwife, Alexandra a farm manager, and their friendship remains limited.

It is not just Alexandra's refusal, or one might say her inability, to play a traditional role that creates barriers between the two



women. Alexandra has limited experience in relationships and is emotionally unperceptive. Because she does not fulfill conventional expectations, she is forced to become a loner. She can enjoy her servants' romantic relationships at second hand,<sup>41</sup> appreciate Ivar's friendship, and love her brother Emil, but she does not become close with any of them. Cather created no character with whom Alexandra can establish a mutual relationship. As a result she is more used to managing agricultural affairs than human ones. Her understanding of Emil's and Marie's death makes this evident (278).

In that tragedy Alexandra uncharacteristically accepts a traditionally gendered point of view. Although she cannot believe that Marie's "being warmhearted and impulsive" was wrong, her brother is dead and Frank is in the penitentiary (283). With little experience at deciphering human conflicts, she cannot create an explanation with new gender dimensions. Saying that the jealous husband who fired the fatal shots was least at fault, Alexandra "blamed Marie bitterly" for bringing "destruction and sorrow to all who had loved her" (283), just as Marie earlier blamed herself for the failure of her marriage, in spite of her husband's actions and attitudes (235). In blaming the woman for the man's violence, Alexandra repeats a traditional story.<sup>42</sup> Her blindness, ironically, is a result of her turning away from traditional women's roles and thus cutting herself off from close personal relationships.

One other way the novel registers the social costs of resisting gender norms is through Alexandra's relationship with her mother (151-52). Like almost all the female characters in the novel, her mother is pictured negatively. The narrator's first comment about her is that Mr. Bergson had married beneath himself. Mrs. Bergson (the only name given her), like many pioneer women, creates domestic order through gardening and canning, but this is disparaged as a "mania." Although she is given credit for "keep[ing] the family from dis-

integrating morally and getting careless in their ways," this praise is prefaced with the comment that she loves comfort and routine, hardly pioneer virtues from Cather's perspective. In wanting a house made of wood instead of sod and in making an effort to add fish to the family's diet, she is pictured as selfish rather than nurturing. Since even as a young person Alexandra helps manage the farm, domesticity divides Mrs. Bergson from her daughter. As Smith-Rosenberg notes, "Resentful words, lingering guilt, and consequent alienation divided the New Women from their mothers and their female kin" (257). Rather than giving each other love and support, these two women, each a pioneer in her own way, are isolated by their different positions on the gender divide.<sup>43</sup>

The one person Alexandra does become close with is Carl. Near the end of the novel, they decide to marry. Because Alexandra has just returned from the state penitentiary to visit Marie's husband, Frank Shabata, the novel establishes a contrast in relationships. The Shabata marriage is based on gender differences that create conflict and unhappiness. Alexandra is confident that her marriage will be different: "I think when friends marry, they are safe. We don't suffer like—those young ones" (290). A marriage between friends emphasizes gender similarity, in this case almost to the point of making gender irrelevant. Their marriage could have the "ethic of refined, tender passion between spouses" advocated by the social purity movement, which at the end of the nineteenth century was responding to women's moving out of the domestic sphere.<sup>44</sup> As a result, Cather's early readers could assume that Alexandra's marriage would not end in the disaster of Marie's two relationships.

At the turn of the century, "American newspapers and magazines brimmed with speculation about the crisis of marriage and the family."<sup>45</sup> The dramatically rising divorce rate was evidence of the crisis: "Between 1870 and 1920, the number of divorces increased fifteen fold."

Many Americans believed that the family was being destroyed, but in fact a new kind of family was emerging from these demographic and cultural revolutions: It was the "companionate family," a new model and ideal of family function and behavior, which remains with us today.<sup>46</sup>

Carl and Alexandra reflect this new companionate ideal that rejected "the separate spheres that underlay nineteenth-century sexual codes."<sup>47</sup>

#### DEFINING THE LAND

Alexandra's unresolved conflicts in her personal relationships are further complicated by the competing definitions of her relationship to the land. Even at the end of the novel, conflicting concepts remain. Cather here turns away from both the Turnerian frontier construction of subduing the land and the professional, managerial perspective of the New Woman. Instead, the author engages a mythic vision of the land in order to supersede these competitive, materialist interpretations. She depicts Alexandra as creating a reassuring life story for herself. At the same time Cather offers her readers a comforting national story which suggests that, in spite of rising industrialism and corporate capitalism, the basic national values are spiritual, not economic. Alexandra states,

The land belongs to the future, Carl. . . . How many of the names on the county clerk's plat will be there in fifty years? I might as well try to will the sunset over there to my brother's children. . . . [T]he people who love it and understand it are the people who own it—for a little while. (289)

As an older woman who has lost almost everyone she has cared about, Alexandra creates a transcendent meaning for her life's work. The more distant, Whitmanesque voice lends author-

ity to the novel's concluding sentence: "Fortunate country, that is one day to receive hearts like Alexandra's into its bosom, to give them out again in the yellow wheat, in the rustling corn, in the shining eyes of youth!" (290).

This hopeful ending comfortably elides the family strife that makes up so much of this novel. Alexandra's mythic vision of the land also avoids troubling economic and social realities. The grain mentioned in the final sentence is not commodified, and the youth have not grasped their role in a corporate agricultural system that was as dependent on Chicago commodities trading and railroad shipping rates as it was on the vision of individual farmers. Conflicting gender roles and definitions of farming are transcended as human agency is subordinated to a vision in which the land itself is the great actor in a drama of eternal renewal.

However, this mythic vision is called into question by the narrative context Cather gives it.<sup>48</sup> Each time it is expressed, it is in response to male characters who are threatened by Alexandra's independence. Subordination of personal agency is not only characteristic of her mythic vision but also a rhetorical strategy in particular circumstances. The conclusion of the first section, "Wild Lands," is the first example. Alexandra has just convinced her doubting brothers that their success depends on land speculation. As if to then deflect attention away from her protagonist's economic insight and initiative, Cather follows this with an expression of Alexandra's close relationship to the land:

She had felt as if her heart were hiding down there, somewhere, with the quail and the plover and all the little wild things that crooned or buzzed in the sun. Under the long shaggy ridges, she felt the future stirring. (173)

In contrast to this scene, Cather uses a much different approach when the farm is well established and competing interpretations of the

past put much at stake. Arguing with Lou and Oscar, Alexandra strategically does not claim that the land itself was the agent of success. Rather she creates a strong role for herself as she acknowledges both their hard work and her own astute management (219-21).

It is with Carl that Alexandra is most self-effacing in asserting a mythic vision of the land. At his first return to the Divide, and in response to his self-deprecating contrast between his "engraving of other men's pictures" and the landscape her farming has created, Alexandra claims, "We had n't [sic] any of us much to do with it, Carl. The land did it. . . . [W]e suddenly found that we were rich, just from sitting still" (194). When cautiously, indirectly wooing Carl, Alexandra makes herself seem less threatening by denying her own agency. She does the same in the novel's conclusion: "'You belong to the land,' Carl murmur[s]" to Alexandra near the end as they walk along a ridge overlooking the original Bergson homestead, and Alexandra talks about feeling peace and freedom because the land belongs to the future (289).

However, this mythic vision, used to ease tensions in relationships, does not resolve the conflict over the meaning of the land's (and by implication, the nation's) productivity. Just preceding Alexandra's above comment, she "suddenly," seemingly incongruously, interjects to Carl, "Lou and Oscar can't see those things." This awkward juxtaposition suggests that Alexandra's defensive need to sustain a mythic vision of the land is rooted in economic and social conflict. In its explanation of the still-troubling tension with Lou and Oscar, Alexandra's mythic vision vindicates her economic and social independence. Their estrangement (221, 229) can be attributed to the brothers' spiritual blindness rather than to conflicting explanations of the farm's success.

#### REASSURING THE READER

In similar ways this mythic vision of the land could provide early readers a reassuring model for negotiating a difficult economic and

cultural transition by explaining changes in non-material terms. Yet the novel does not resolve the conflicting definitions of Alexandra's role in the Bergson farm success story. She is depicted as a female Turnerian hero who transforms the struggling homestead into a successful farm, as a rural New Woman managing an agribusiness increasingly shaped by bureaucratic values antithetical to frontier individualism, and as an agrarian woman who finds a transcendent relationship with the land and is comforted by aligning herself with "the great operations of nature . . . [and] the law that lay behind them" (173). If the title of the novel suggests that the mythic definition has priority, the novel itself does not so easily order these competing constructions of meaning. As the site of these competing constructions, Alexandra is emblematic of the struggle the United States faced at the turn of the century in reconciling its rural, pioneer past with the cultural transformations inherent in the urban New Woman and the industrialism from which she emerged.

O *Pioneers!* could help readers feel more comfortable with the transition. Yet the novel is not just a reassuring, premodern pastoral. As T. Jackson Lears suggests (in the quote near the beginning of this essay), anti-modernism was a protest against but also an accommodation to modern material realities. Alexandra brings the Turnerian pioneer ideal of individualism and inventiveness to a new professional, managerial context. The American character ideal could be maintained, she implies, even as the new prosperity allowed citizens to escape traditional hardships as they established managerial careers in the city. Alexandra does not work the land herself, yet she has a closer relationship to it than her brothers who are directly engaged in the physical labor of farming. Cather also has her protagonist recognize that rural America does not exist in isolation. Although Alexandra has her face "set toward [the Divide] with love and yearning" (170), she also acknowledges to Carl when he returns from the city that "[i]f the world were no wider than my corn-



fields . . . I would n't [sic] feel that it was much worth while to work" (198). In this she suggests that the country's self-definition as Nature's Nation could still be maintained, with some adaptation, in the face of new urban realities.

A third reassurance Alexandra offers relates to gender conflicts of the time. Her freedom from traditional women's roles was based on her economic independence, a hallmark of the New Woman. While this was certainly threatening to her brothers, Cather makes Alexandra reassuring to her readers by showing her independence not as a cause in itself but as a necessity reluctantly accepted. Circumstances force her to take a role that would normally have gone to one of the brothers, and she pays a considerable price for taking that position. When she finally marries at the end of the novel, Alexandra finds peace but not necessarily reconciliation. As discussed above, the conflicts with her brothers are troublingly evaded rather than resolved. In her mind, Alexandra continues to argue with her brothers while not acknowledging their underlying differences, just as the novel is filled with conflicts that Alexandra experiences but only understands in limited ways.

#### PLEASURES OF THE TEXT

*O Pioneers!* offers, among many other things, a representation of the conflicting constructions of meaning that U.S. society was continuing to develop as it adjusted to industrial capitalism and the urban mass culture that it shaped. One of the significant uses and deep pleasures of reading this novel is to see Cather's sensitive, open, and imaginative registering of the tensions within her society. She gained narrative power from her conflicted, anti-modernist perspective. This experimental work is pivotal for her Midwest fiction, coming between her early short stories, which emphasize the nearly inhumane conditions of pioneer life, and the later, more exclusively celebratory works.<sup>49</sup> Her open stance soon became more guarded. As Nebraska became a

badge of allegiance she wore<sup>50</sup> rather than a social construction she explored, the mythic vision of the land came to predominate. In the same way her protagonists' gender roles came to reflect that narrower range of vision. However, with Alexandra Willa Cather created a reluctant New Woman pioneer, an engaging character who, like Cather herself, embodied many ideals and tensions of her time.

#### NOTES

1. T. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), pp. xv-xvi, xix, emphasis added.

2. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 304.

3. Quoted in Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 86.

4. T. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in *The Culture of Consumption*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 10.

5. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," quoted in *The Call of the Wild (1900-1916)*, ed. Roderick Nash (New York: George Braziller, 1970), p. 79.

6. Roderick Nash, introduction to Nash, *ibid.*, p. 19.

7. Ernest Thompson Seton, *Boy Scouts of America*, quoted in Nash, *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

8. Roderick Nash, introduction to Nash, *ibid.*, p. 1.

9. Willa Cather, "Nebraska: The End of the First Cycle," *The Nation*, 5 September 1923, 236, 238. The Great Plains was "the last major American agricultural frontier." In 1870 there were fewer than 50,000 farms in Nebraska, Kansas, and the Dakotas. By 1900 there were 400,000. Part of a general expansion of American agriculture, this increase was "stimulated mainly by the industrialization and urbanization in the United States and Europe." David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 133-34.

10. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (1920; reprint, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), p. 37.

11. Deborah Fink, *Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 4.

Sandra L. Meyers adds support to this assessment in her *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 258. Glenda Riley, in *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), p. 19, explains that "some women homesteaders retained their single status" while many women spent part of their lives as married and part as single. However, neither Meyers in her chapter on "Women as Frontier Entrepreneurs" or Riley in "A Profile of Frontierwomen on the Prairie and the Plains" gives an example like Alexandra, a single woman managing the family farm.

12. Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*, in *Early Novels and Stories*, ed. Sharon O'Brien (New York: Library of America, 1987), p. 219. Further citations to *O Pioneers!* are given in parentheses in the text.

13. Fink, *Agrarian Women* (note 11 above), pp. 67, 10. Deborah Fink notes that women's home enterprises, most often limited to egg and cream sales, were "a necessary precondition" for their full participation in social life. However, "[t]he organization of labor within the nuclear family undermined its liberating potential. The work of their wives and children often gave men time for civic involvements beyond the family; women were seldom able to draw on the labor of family members for similar release." As she states, this is the thesis of her book (p. 10).

14. Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-80* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), p. 106.

15. Riley, *Female Frontier* (note 11 above), p. 3.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

17. Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller, "The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West," *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (May 1980): 187.

18. Hermione Lee, *Willa Cather: Double Lives* (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1989), pp. 31-32.

19. James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. 35, 43-45.

20. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 245, emphasis added.

21. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, introduction to *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms*, ed. A. Richardson and C. Willis (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 10-11.

22. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (note 20 above), p. 45.

23. Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press,

1987), p. 15. Feminists wanted more than suffrage; that was "only a tool." Cott summarizes a 1913 *Harper's Weekly* article: "The real goal was a 'complete social revolution': freedom from all forms of women's active expression, elimination of all structural and psychological handicaps to women's economic independence, an end to the double standard of sexual morality, release from constraining sexual stereotypes, and opportunity to shine in every civic and professional capacity" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

24. Margaret Anne O'Connor, ed., *Willa Cather: The Contemporary Reviews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 45, 56, 57.

25. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 6.

26. William Conlogue convincingly argues that Cather positively presents Alexandra as a representative of the New Agriculture while her brothers are negatively associated with the populists. "Managing the Farm, Educating the Farmer: *O Pioneers!* and the New Agriculture," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21 (winter 2001): pp. 11-12.

27. Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism* (note 23 above), p. 21.

28. Roosevelt, "Strenuous Life" (note 5 above), p. 81.

29. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (note 20 above), p. 253.

30. "Reflecting the New Agriculture's view of farming as a business rather than as a way of life, *O Pioneers!* argues that farm work is first white-collar work." Conlogue, "Managing the Farm" (note 26 above), p. 8.

31. William Conlogue describes Cather as an "urban agrarian": forward thinking in agricultural understanding yet "concerned with rural uplift and uneasy about the nation's burgeoning industrial system." Believers in the Jeffersonian agrarian myth, urban agrarians sought answers to urban problems in the countryside (*ibid.*, p. 4).

32. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (note 20 above), p. 252.

33. Carolyn Christensen Nelson, introduction to *A New Woman Reader: Fiction, Articles, and Drama of the 1890s*, ed. C. C. Nelson (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2001), pp. x-xi.

34. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (note 20 above), p. 278.

35. Warren Motley, "The Unfinished Self: Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* and the Psychic Cost of a Woman's Success," *Women's Studies* 12 (1986): 149-50.

36. Although Freud had only come to the United States four years before *O Pioneers!* was published, "by the mid-1910s, popularizers were presenting Freudian ideas to a larger audience," which under-

stood the concept of repression that was implied in both Alexandra's dream and her vine-tree metaphor. John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper, 1988), p. 223.

37. "Farm families found a swelling cornucopia of factory-made goods available to them. . . . But consuming urban products . . . inevitably meant at least some rural conformity to urban standards of culture, taste and value." Danbom, *Born in the Country* (note 9 above), p. 133.

38. Douglas W. Werden argues that both Alexandra and Marie "are pioneers in crossing socially constructed gender barriers . . . [and] overturn the presupposition that farm women are necessarily subordinate farmwives who support their husbands by working in the domestic sphere" "She had never humbled herself: Alexandra Bergson and Marie Shabata as the 'Real' Pioneers of *O Pioneers!*" *Great Plains Quarterly* 22 (summer 2002): 199. While Marie does resist her husband's expectations, I see her transgressing traditional moral strictures rather than challenging gender roles of the time.

39. Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (note 25 above), p. 77.

40. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (note 20 above), p. 53.

41. Motley, "Unfinished Self" (note 35 above), p. 154.

42. Cather earlier used this traditional story of blaming the woman to explain Alexandra's grandfather's financial and moral ruin (149). The repetition of this story suggests that for Cather this is more than a narrative strategy to make her protagonist less threatening.

43. Sharon O'Brien's biography presents Mrs. Bergson much more positively than I have. She claims that Alexandra and her mother are collaborators in successfully cultivating the land. Sharon

O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1987), p. 441. While this interpretation is appealing, the connection made in the text is between Mrs. Bergson and her convention-bound, intellectually limited son Oscar (ibid., p. 151). Rather than suggesting continuity between old traditions and new circumstances as O'Brien argues, I see Cather presenting Mrs. Bergson as failing to adapt to new circumstances.

44. D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters* (note 36 above), pp. 172, 150-51.

45. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 8.

46. Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), p. 109.

47. D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters* (note 36 above), p. 172.

48. Howard Horwitz, "O Pioneers! and the Paradox of Property: Cather's Aesthetics of Divestment," in *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies*, vol. 13, ed. Jack Salzman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 64.

49. A comparison with *My Antonia* reveals the shift. In this novel Cather uses the same Turnerian strategy of cutting off the diminished present from the heroic past that we saw in her essay "Nebraska" (note 9 above). Rather than focusing on the successful second-generation Swedish farmers of *O Pioneers!*, who can more easily embody conflicts within U.S. society, Cather in the later novel uses poor Bohemians who choose not to speak English and remain largely cut off from society. As a result, *Antonia's* strength as a woman, seen through the eyes of Jim Burden, is considerably less threatening to the traditional construction of gender than Alexandra's assertiveness is to her brothers.

50. Woodress, *Willa Cather* (note 19 above), p. 36.



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# Read the Future

# THE CUPS OF BLOOD ARE EMPTIED

## PIETISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TWO DANISH IMMIGRANT SCHOOLS ON THE GREAT PLAINS

JOHN MARK NIELSEN

"The Great Plains Drinks the Blood of Christian Men and Is Satisfied"  
—Ole Rølvaag, *Giants in the Earth*

Following the American Civil War, the vast sweep of the Great Plains exerted a powerful force on the imagination of Americans and Northern European immigrants, resulting in a period of rapid settlement. Immigrant communities in particular attempted to establish institutions through which their language,

beliefs and cultural heritage might be preserved. The history of these immigrant institutions mirrors the challenges immigrant communities faced in confronting not only the vicissitudes of climate and evolving economic conditions but also the pressures of assimilation.

**KEY WORDS:** alternative education, Danish American Lutheranism, Immigrant religious life, immigrant schools, Rølvaag

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Numerous works of both fiction and non-fiction explore the broader challenges of life in the Great Plains; none captures the experiences of immigrants as does Ole Rølvaag's trilogy, *Giants in the Earth*, *Peder Victorious*, and *Their Fathers' God*. Rølvaag depicts not only the environmental challenges immigrants faced but the religious conflicts that arise from denominational differences. Ever present, particularly in the first novel, is the Great Plains, which Rølvaag personifies as a she-monster, a primordial giantess, patiently biding her time as Norwegian immigrants coming to this vast, open grassland in 1873 struggle to gain a foothold and to transform the "American desert" into a land of "milk and honey."

Novels such as Rølvaag's focus on the experiential level of individuals and communities and help readers to enter vicariously into that experience. While historical and geographical studies have focused on the broader experience, few have addressed specific immigrant groups or explored the institutions they founded. Such an investigation can offer insight into how these institutions provided opportunities for both self-expression and identification. The history of individual institutions can also serve as a barometer, reflecting the pressures that the forces of environment and assimilation exerted on individual immigrant communities.

This is the story of two church-related immigrant institutions founded on the Great Plains by Danish Lutherans: Nysted Folk High School in Nysted, Nebraska, which existed from 1887 to 1934, and Brorson High School, in rural Kenmare, North Dakota, which operated from 1901 to 1917 and again from 1919 to 1920. Both schools were modeled on the concept of the Danish folk high school, a movement inspired by the thought and writings of the Danish poet, religious leader, and educator Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). The teaching at each school, however, reflected competing understandings of faith and life among the Danish Lutheran immigrants, leading to bitter divisions within the small Danish American population. Both schools depended on energetic, charismatic individuals under whose leadership the two schools flourished, but the efforts of these individuals were not enough in the face of changing weather patterns, population movement, and evolving economic, social, and political realities. Ultimately, both schools were closed. The struggles faced by supporters of these two schools are foreshadowed in the last chapter of *Giants in the Earth*, entitled "The Great Plains Drinks the Blood of Christian Men and Is Satisfied," which metaphorically captures the interplay between human effort and a sometimes harsh and unforgiving environment.

## THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

The theological differences that resulted in a division among Danish Lutheran immigrants have been treated extensively by John M. Jensen, Paul C. Nyholm and Enok Mortensen, among others, in their studies of the two Danish American Lutheran synods.<sup>1</sup> A brief summary of the two sides is useful since the theological understandings informed the curriculum of Nysted Folk High School and Brorson High School. Essentially, the division arose from differences in interpreting scripture and the role cultural heritage played in the life of a Christian.

On one side were those who had been influenced by Protestant pietistic traditions arising in Germany during the seventeenth century. This group had its roots in the informal conventicles, or "godly gatherings," that had formed in Denmark to reawaken the faith of members within the state church. (Prior to the passage of the Constitution of 1849, Danish law prohibited any formal organizations outside the state church.) Organized in 1853 as the Association for *Indre Mission* (Inner Mission) in Denmark, this group stressed the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as one's savior, disciplined reading of scripture, and active participation in church life, and they saw this world as being fraught with sin and temptation.<sup>2</sup> In this tradition, the Bible was the revealed word of God and therefore inerrant. To reawaken individuals to the faith, the Inner Mission stressed missionary work both within and outside congregations and funded the travel of selected individuals for the express purpose of witnessing for the faith. Immigrants brought this understanding to the United States, although no formal association was formed here. Its influence, however, contributed much to the theology of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association, founded in 1884 and often known as the "Blair Church," and later to that of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (UDELC), or "United



Church," that was formed in 1896 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, although its headquarters continued to be in Blair, Nebraska. \*

On the other side were Danish American Lutherans who had established the "Danish Church" in 1874 and had been influenced by N. F. S. Grundtvig. Grundtvig's study of the Bible and Norse mythology, as well as his experiences as a parish pastor, had led him to two radical but interrelated positions concerning faith, biblical interpretation, and education.<sup>3</sup> A student of mythology, Grundtvig had worked with early medieval manuscripts in both Copenhagen and London and was sensitive to the problems of translating texts. While he encouraged lay people to read scripture, he became increasingly concerned that lay readers, lacking linguistic and historical knowledge, might easily be confused or misled. This led him to challenge the orthodox Lutheran position arising in the seventeenth century that the Bible was the source and primary evidence for the Christian faith. In what he called his "matchless discovery," Grundtvig maintained that the source of faith is the living church and its community of believers. Consequently, his first radical position was that the Apostles' Creed, as the most clearly articulated statement of the living church, was of equal if not greater importance than the Bible, which was the source and inspiration of truth but not the truth itself. "We shall not stand on the Bible and search for the faith," he said, "but stand on the faith and read the Bible."<sup>4</sup>

Grundtvig's second radical position, at least in the eyes of many pietistic Danish Lutherans, related to the everyday lives of Christians in this world. Since God had created man and woman in the divine image, humanity needed to be awakened not only spiritually but culturally. He believed that the language and culture of a people were essential to their identity, and that more importantly this diversity of cultures and languages reflected the diversity of God's creation. The cultural spirit of a people was expressed in their stories, songs,

and dance, and learning about and celebrating this cultural heritage awakened individuals to richer lives and a greater sense of community. Thus, culture and language were worthy of study, preservation, and celebration, and all should have opportunity to learn and experience their cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup>

Grundtvig proposed that the government provide this kind of education by funding a school, of equal status to that of the University of Copenhagen, which would provide a model for education growing out of folk culture. He called it a "high" school although it was to award no degrees, nor was it to prepare students for specific professions. The pedagogy was to differ from the university in that the focus was on instilling within students a lifelong love of learning by appealing to their intuitive and imaginative natures. This could best be achieved through a close, interactive relationship between student and teacher. Furthermore, there were to be no exams and grades, as students could be motivated by their own innate curiosity to learn. While the government did not immediately respond to Grundtvig's proposal, many Danes, particularly in rural areas, saw possibilities in such an approach. In 1844 the first Danish folk high school was established, and by 1867 there were more than forty such schools. (Today there are eighty-six folk high schools in Denmark continuing the tradition of alternative education.) One in particular, Askov Folk High School, provided numerous teachers who both founded and operated Danish folk high schools in America.

The competing theological understandings that informed the faith of Danish American Lutherans often inspired conflict in their communities. At the same time, many who had attended folk high schools in Denmark brought the folk high school concept to the United States. Between 1878, when the first Danish American folk high school was founded in Elk Horn, Iowa, until the late 1930s, a time that parallels the highest immigration from Denmark, seven folk high schools existed. Six were

founded by members of the Danish Church (later known as the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, or AELC) and reflected most closely Grundtvig's positions on both faith and cultural heritage. In addition to the school at Nysted, Nebraska, others operated in Elk Horn, Iowa, from 1878 to 1899; in Ashland, Michigan, from 1882 to 1888; in West Denmark, Wisconsin, for one term in 1884-85; in Tyler, Minnesota, from 1888 until the early 1930s; and in Solvang, California, from 1910 to 1931.<sup>6</sup> Only one, Brorson High School, was founded by members of the United Church (UDELC) and reflected a pietistic understanding.

#### NYSTED FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

Nysted Folk High School was organized in 1887 in the small town of Nysted, located in the center of the large Danish settlement in Howard County, Nebraska. In 1871 Danish immigrants from Waukesha County, Wisconsin, formed the Danish Land and Homestead Company and took out options to purchase 24,000 acres of Union Pacific Railroad land along the north side of the Loup River that flows through the southern part of the county.<sup>7</sup> That same year, members of the homestead company founded the towns of Dannebrog (the name of the Danish flag) and Dannevirke (named after the defensive wall that since Viking times protected Denmark from peoples to the south). Through letters and newspapers, settlers aggressively advertised the existence of this Danish colony, urging other Danes to join them on the plains of Nebraska. Growth led to the founding of Nysted ("new place" in Danish) in 1882. From 1880 through 1910, 10 percent of Howard County's population was born in Denmark, making it one of the most populated Danish counties per capita in the country.<sup>8</sup>

A letter in 1872 from P. C. Petersen (later Dannebrog's postmaster) to a newspaper in Denmark expressed the optimism community members had for the future and the natural urge to create institutions that reflected the

immigrant population. "Last year we founded here a Danish settlement, as they call it, or a Danish colony consisting of fifty families. . . . Schools and churches are going up with remarkable speed, one after another. We Danes intend to build a Danish school and gather a Danish Lutheran Church."<sup>9</sup> Already that year, Pastor Hans Hansen, who in 1884 would be a founding member and president of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association headquartered in Blair, organized the first church and established Dannebrog College. While the congregation flourished, the school lasted only two years. (Ironically, Hansen was later to play a major role in the settlement of Kenmare, North Dakota, and the founding Brorson High School.) By the turn of the century there were ten Danish Lutheran congregations in the county, reflecting both the pietistic and Grundtvigian theological positions. Given Howard County's significant Danish population and the businesses and churches they had established, the desire to establish a folk high school was natural.

Enok Mortensen, who attended Nysted Folk High School during the summer of 1921 and later taught there from 1922 to 1924, has written the most comprehensive history of the Danish folk high schools in the United States. In *Schools for Life: The Grundtvigian Schools in America*, he devoted a chapter to each of the institutions that reflected Grundtvigian spiritual and cultural understanding. A summary of his chapter on the school at Nysted, a review of selected printed materials published by the Nysted Folk High School, and accounts from letters written by members of the Nysted community underscore that the survival of these institutions depended on the devotion of individuals who were willing to sacrifice themselves for a cause in which they believed strongly.

The individual responsible for founding the Nysted Folk High School was Pastor Christian J. Skovgaard, who served as its first *forstander* or principal (for a list of Nysted Folk High School's principals, see Table 1). Newly arrived from Denmark, where he had attended

Askov Folk High School from 1884 to 1886, Skovgaard was anxious to carry on the work of the folk high schools in the new land. Called to serve St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nysted, he worked with other like-minded community members in 1887 to secure a place and to organize classes for a folk high school before winter descended on the plains. His plan for classes followed a schedule that had evolved at the other folk high schools in Elk Horn, Ashland, and West Denmark; a term for men began around mid-November, after the fall harvest, and lasted until early March, just before the spring planting. This made the schools attractive to young immigrant men, who were able to find work on farms throughout the rest of the year. During the winter months, when work was difficult to find, it offered them an opportunity for learning. Classes for young women were offered beginning in late May and lasting until early September. Later, in 1911, the school was to become coeducational, which contributed to increased enrollments.

Nysted Folk High School was officially established on 1 December 1887, although not without some controversy. At the opening ceremonies, one of the speakers, Niels Nielsen, or "King Niels" as he was known in the community, countered the folk school philosophy by suggesting that the school should become an American school as soon as possible, as "there was no practical advantage in learning Danish." However, a student who had come from Minnesota responded, "If this be an American school, I need not have come here all the way from Minnesota, for that kind of schools we have there, but no Danish folk schools which is what I need."<sup>10</sup> This exchange captured a tension that existed within most immigrant communities, and it continued to be a debated issue among those who were advocates for the Danish folk high school movement in America. There were students who wanted to study their Danish heritage, but many young immigrants were interested in the schools as opportunities to learn English within the context of a familiar environment. Their

TABLE 1  
PRINCIPALS  
AT NYSTED FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

1887-90	Christian J. Skovgaard
1891-98	H. C. Strandkov
1898-1901	Thorvald Knudsen (St. Peder's, 1898-1903)
1901-6	A. Theodor Dorf (St. Peder's, 1903-6)
1906-7	No classes; school stood empty.
1907-12	Carl P. Højbjerg
1912-31	Aage Møller
1931-34	Carl P. Højbjerg

Note: All also served as pastors of St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nysted, organized in 1883.

goal was to assimilate, to become Americans. Table 2 is the weekly class schedule at Nysted Folk High School in 1911. Classes in English assisted students in their efforts to assimilate.

Early enrollments were not encouraging. Only twelve students registered for the first term that ran from 1 December to 1 March, and Skovgaard continually struggled to attract students. In 1890 he gave up and accepted a call to a congregation in Iowa, leaving the congregation to retire the debts that had accrued and to identify a new leader. They called Pastor H. C. Strandkov, who had taught at the folk high school in Ashland, Michigan. Recognizing the needs of immigrant students, he initiated classes in English and American history and geography. To appeal to his Danish audience and to celebrate Grundtvig's birthday on 8 September, he established *Septemberfest*. Over a two- to three-day period, lectures, discussions, singing, and folk dancing were scheduled, much as in the American tradition of the Chautauqua movement. These innovations led to a small increase in enrollment. Between 1891 and 1894, fifty-nine men



TABLE 2

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE AT NYSTED FOLK HIGH SCHOOL AFTER 1911<sup>11</sup>

	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag
7:45	Frokost [breakfast]	Frokost	Frokost	Frokost	Frokost
8:50	Morgensang [morning prayer]	Morgensang	Morgensang	Morgensang	Morgensang
9:00-9:40	Engelsk A Engelsk B Engelsk C	Engelsk A Engelsk B Engelsk C	Engelsk A Engelsk B Engelsk C	Engelsk A Engelsk B Engelsk C	Engelsk A Engelsk B Engelsk C
9:45-10:25	Arithm. A Arithm. B	Lecture & Discussion	Arithm. A Arithm. B	Lecture & Discussion	Arithm. A Arithm. B
10:30-11:10	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion
11:15-12:00	Dansk Engelsk B Engelsk C	Dansk Engelsk B Engelsk C	Dansk Engelsk B Engelsk C	Dansk Engelsk B Engelsk C	Dansk Engelsk B Engelsk C
12:00	Middag [dinner]	Middag	Middag	Middag	Middag
1:30-2:15	Girls' Gym	Girls' Gym	Girls' Gym	Girls' Gym	Girls' Gym
2:15-3:00	Boys' Gym	Boys' Gym	Boys' Gym	Boys' Gym	Boys' Gym
3:10	Kaffe [coffee]	Kaffe	Kaffe	Kaffe	Kaffe
3:30-4:10	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion
4:15-4:55	Astronomy	General Science	Astronomy	General Science	Astronomy
6:00	Aftensmad [supper]	Aftensmad	Aftensmad	Aftensmad	Aftensmad
7:15-8:15	Girls' Basketball		Boys' Basketball		Girls' Basketball
8:30-9:30	Oplæsning [group reading] Aftensang [evening song]	Oplæsning Aftensang	Oplæsning Aftensang	Torsdags- møde (meeting)	Boys' Basketball

Folkedans en Gang om Ugen [folk dancing one time a week]

Source: *Nysted People's College* (Dannebrog, Nebr.: n.p., n.d. [1932], p. 2).

had attended the winter terms, and the participation in the September meetings was high, drawing crowds from surrounding communities and counties.

Strandskov left Nysted in 1898, largely due to his wife's illness, which was exacerbated by her many responsibilities as a pastor's wife, overseeing the household duties of both parsonage and folk high school. (The struggles of immigrant women echo Rølvaag's depiction of Beret in *Giants in the Earth* but are seldom if ever discussed in immigrant church histories.) The congregation then called Pastor Thorvald Knudsen, who had newly arrived in the United States. Like Skovgaard before him, Knudsen had studied at Askov Folk High School in Denmark, but unlike his predecessors he had also attended the University of Copenhagen, and so had broader academic preparation. Furthermore, he was a dynamic speaker with a wide range of interests, and under his leadership, according to Enok Mortensen, Nysted Folk High School experienced its "golden years."

In his book *Life in an American Denmark*, Alfred C. Nielsen, a Nysted native who later served as president of Grand View College, described Knudsen as "a handsome man . . . medium in height, with natural dignity. His personality commanded attention. He was an excellent speaker, one of the best I have ever heard. He was a leader of men and he usually got what he wanted. . . . Like Caesar, he came, he saw, he conquered."<sup>11</sup> In part Knudsen was successful because he was able to inspire and engage the young people in the community. He organized a Young People's Society and for activities gave public readings on Friday evenings (the first novel was *Ben Hur* in a Danish translation) and started a gymnastics team and a rifle club.<sup>12</sup>

During Knudsen's years at Nysted, the enrollment increased. In his first year, thirty-three students attended the winter term of 1898-99, and by 1904, a year after Knudsen's departure to lead Danebod Folk High School in Tyler, Minnesota, forty-five students were enrolled in the winter term. As a result of

increasing annual enrollments, the school buildings were remodeled and expanded, and hopes were high. In 1901 Knudsen stepped down as principal although he continued to serve St. Peder's congregation and to teach at the school until 1903. A. Theodor Dorf, a gifted scholar who was later to become a professor of Assyriology at the University of Chicago, replaced him as principal. In an effort to continue increasing enrollments, Dorf began publishing the quarterly *For Dansk-Amerikansk Højskole* (For Danish American High Schools).

In an early publication from his tenure, Dorf articulated the goals of the folk high school movement in the United States, goals that clearly echo Grundtvigian philosophy. His comments also, however, reflected an ongoing philosophical debate on the purpose of education. To the Grundtvigians, education was and should be more than preparation for an occupation.

Our school is neither a high school nor a college. To call it an academy would be more appropriate, for an academy is a name applied to any school where the higher branches of learning are taught, regardless of either curriculum or degree. Our school, then, is an academy of General Culture,—culture for culture's sake only and not for the sake of a livelihood. Its aim is to give to students, by way of lectures in history, geography, civics and literature and practice in the most necessary arts and sciences, a select acquaintance with what is best in life, and to send them back to their respective homes with a broader outlook upon life's privileges and duties. The kind of an education sought by most people to-day, and the only kind given by most schools, is the education that will give, or pretend to give, the students, when through, a good paying position. . . . We might call [our school] an Academy of Home Culture, for its aim is . . . to make [students], both morally and spiritually, better citizens and better members of the home and church circle.<sup>13</sup>



FIG. 1. *Nysted Folk High School after the 1910 remodeling.* Courtesy of the Danish Immigrant Archive, Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.

Despite his best efforts, Dorf was unable to imitate Knudsen's success in recruiting students. Two years after Knudsen's departure from Nysted, enrollment for the winter term of 1905-6 dropped to seventeen students. During the summer of 1906 Dorf gave up and returned to Denmark for several years. After his departure the school stood empty until the fall of 1907, when the community was able to secure the services of Carl P. Højbjerg, who had been serving as professor of theology at Grand View College and Seminary in Des Moines, Iowa.

During C. P. Højbjerg's first tenure at Nysted Folk High School (he was to return again in 1931), the school again flourished. A graduate of the University of Copenhagen, he had earned a reputation for academic excellence while teaching at Grand View College. Consequently, he was able to attract a cadre

of gifted teachers, and enrollments increased, averaging fifty men during the winter term and forty women during the summer term. To further take advantage of the facilities, Højbjerg initiated *Martsstævne* (March meeting), a weeklong session in mid-March. Modeled on the annual September meetings, the activities were church-related and appealed to members of surrounding congregations. Finally, in 1911, the school became coeducational. This resulted in sixty-eight students registering for the winter term, the highest enrollment the school had achieved. The increased activities inspired the support of the community; the buildings were renovated, a heating system was installed, and in 1910, a new wing and tower were added (see Fig. 1).

The efforts, however, of serving the congregation and operating the folk school exacted a toll, particularly on Højbjerg's wife,



Hilda, who, like so many wives, labored to support her husband's efforts. Furthermore, they had lost their oldest son, Leif, who died in the summer of 1909. In 1911 she became ill, and in an effort to regain her health, she and their remaining three children returned to Denmark in April. The following year, Højbjerg left Nysted and joined his family in Denmark. He remained there until 1915, when he returned with his family to become president of Grand View College, a position he occupied until 1925. He was, however, to return again to Nysted in 1931.

In a series of letters to his three children (among them Otto Hoiberg, emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln), written shortly before his death in 1953, C. P. Højbjerg remembered his first years at Nysted and the challenges they presented, particularly for his wife.

In a sense, it seems to me, the situation was somewhat akin to Paradise. . . . Whether or not we accomplished anything? I don't know. I hope so. We put forth tremendous efforts. And we sang, sang, sang—in unison, terrific! Kr. Andersen organized a chorus for part-singing. He handled Danish history, gymnastics, and singing. Ammentorp taught Danish literature. . . . Yes, we had many magnificent students. How I wish that we had photographs of them all and were familiar with their subsequent life histories. My brother Valdemar was a student one winter. . . . [He] helped the cook bake pancakes every Saturday morning. Niels Hermansen taught Mother-Hilda the art of dissecting a pig on the kitchen table (a whole pig at a time). It doesn't take long for fifty young men to consume a pig! . . . Mother-Hilda arranged for substantial and nutritious meals; and we always had competent kitchen help. She directed the whole operation with great skill; and in addition, had small children to care for. . . . Well, then Mother and [you] children departed for Denmark . . . and I followed in 1912. . . . Mother's illness was the reason; but within

two years she was much improved. . . . We could, of course, have returned to Nysted; but I simply didn't dare. Mother was unable to get the rest she needed at the Folk School; and that was the problem. If we could have had a private, quiet dwelling, I still believe we might have ventured to return to Nysted in the fall of 1912.<sup>14</sup>

After Højbjerg's departure in 1912, the congregation and local folk school committee secured the services of Rev. Aage Møller. Born in West Denmark, Wisconsin, and educated at Grand View College, he was the first American-born and -educated principal of a folk high school in this country, although he had spent some time in Denmark. Furthermore, he was to serve Nysted Folk High School for almost twenty years, longer than any other leader. This was in large measure because he was a compelling speaker and had a charming personality. According to Mortensen, who was both his student and a colleague in the early 1920s, Møller was able to engage audiences through a "mystic and almost prophetic dynamism" that made him more of a prophet than a teacher.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Møller was interested in social justice issues and was not shy about speaking out on behalf of political forces that advocated for the poor and disenfranchised. He lectured on Upton Sinclair, supported the Socialist Eugene Debs, and was in contact with Jane Adams at Hull House in Chicago. This social activism often brought him into conflict with conservative members in the community.

With the advent of World War I, immigration from Denmark decreased dramatically. Since young Danish immigrants were a significant part of the student populations at the few folk high schools scattered across the country, all experienced declining enrollments. In addition, the war inspired a rise in American nativism and pressures for immigrant groups to assimilate, pressures that led many within the Danish American community to question the need for such schools. Møller, not surprisingly, felt differently. Writing in 1919, he argued:

[T]here are those who contend that it is useless to have a Danish school. Let me answer by saying that in as much as Nysted Folk School primarily is led by people born, and who will live and die in our country, people who feel themselves heartily at home in the great amalgamated and living society which is America, and who aim to help young people to see how fully they can realize their humanity by living in the USA, it seems to me that this school is as fully justified in calling itself an American school as any other.<sup>16</sup>

Despite nativist pressures, Møller forged ahead, believing that the folk school had a role to play in expanding the continuing educational opportunities for local community members. Lectures and reading circles were an important part of this effort. In a letter written in Danish in 1922, which has only recently come to light, Gudrun Nielsen, who with her husband had an eighty-acre dairy farm south of Nysted, described for her father, a dairy farmer in Tyler, Minnesota, a lecture she and her husband attended at the folk high school:

The other night he [Møller] spoke about a new book. . . . he then told us about an Italian woman, who has a school in Rome. Montessori. She is a doctor and has studied much. She has a school where the children hardly know they are learning . . . it's almost like a game. . . . Yes, he [Møller] has so many interesting things to tell us.<sup>17</sup>

Numerous other letters from this collection describe the school's activities and Møller's efforts to engage and improve the lives of community members. However, during the 1920s the community's population began to decline as economic and environmental conditions on the Plains deteriorated. Møller's responses to these changes were often radical and put him at odds with community members. Finally, he resigned his post both as pastor and principal in 1931. His legacy, however, is far-reaching.

Elsewhere I have discussed how he and Enok Mortensen influenced Myles Horton and the founding of Highlander Research and Education Center, an educational center modeled on the Danish folk high school movement that played a role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and inspired the founders of Elderhostel.<sup>18</sup>

Møller's resignation in 1931 at the height of the Great Depression left the local folk school committee in a difficult position during desperate times. They were, however, successful in persuading C. P. Højbjerg to return to Nysted. Since his departure from the school in 1912, Højbjerg had served a parish in Denmark until 1915, when he and his family returned to the United States to serve as president of Grand View College and Seminary in Des Moines. In 1925 he left this post to become pastor and principal at the congregation and folk school in Tyler, Minnesota. Perhaps Højbjerg's statement to his children referred to above, that the situation at Nysted "was akin to Paradise," explains his willingness to leave Minnesota in the midst of drought and depression. Despite his best efforts and the commitment and work of his sons Hans and Otto Hoiberg (who had anglicized the spelling of Højbjerg) and Arnold and Edith Bodtker, who were later to found the Danish American Heritage Society in 1977, Højbjerg's second tenure at Nysted was to mark the end of the Danish folk high school experience on the Great Plains.

Arriving in Nysted in 1931, Højbjerg threw himself into raising money and recruiting students for the school. His passionate advocacy for the folk high school approach reflected both his Lutheran and Grundtvigian heritage. Writing in Danish, Højbjerg addressed skeptics within the Danish American community.

Many complain that the folk high schools do not send forth from their lecture halls, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and others of similar position. For almost a hundred years now, those who advocate for the folk high schools answer: Could we but send

forth individuals fully awakened to their humanity. . . . These individuals have greater value than the professional. . . . It is well enough to be educated for a vocation . . . but there is a vocation that is common to all of us, the call to be fully alive as human beings. . . . It is nothing to be born into the world as a child with eyes, ears and all our limbs as Luther says. It is something infinitely greater. Life is God's gift to each and every one of us. . . . [W]e ask accordingly: has anyone ever noted among any people or within any land the phenomenon that a man has had courage and faith enough to call all the nation's young people to attend a "school for life"?<sup>19</sup>

Advertisements run in Danish American newspapers and the college catalogs of 1932-33 and 1933-34 reflect the social and economic challenges Højbjerg and the school faced. Not the least was assimilation. In an attempt to identify with a population that now included second- and third-generation Danish Americans, few who spoke Danish, the school was renamed the Nysted People's College, and English was the language of the classroom. Only Højbjerg continued to deliver the main lecture of the day in Danish. The curriculum, too, reflected the times. Social welfare and economic issues, topics that Aage Møller had championed, dominated the 1932-33 catalog. Among the issues scheduled for consideration were "Capitalism, Socialism and Communism," "The Causes of World War," "The Future of Farming," "Science and Religion," and "The Role of the Negro in American Civilization."<sup>20</sup> Tuition and room and board, which had steadily increased over the 1920s, were lowered to \$80 for the winter term that extended from 1 December 1932 through 1 March 1933. This was done, according to Hans Hoiberg, "not with the intention of 'underbidding' other educational institutions, but because it is a matter of life and death to us; a reduction in tuition is . . . a superior policy to a reduction in the size of the student body."<sup>21</sup> It was not enough, and when tuition for the

next year was increased to \$100, too few students enrolled. The 1933-34 term was canceled, and the school was officially closed in 1934.

C. P. Højbjerg and his wife left Nysted in 1936 for the last time, returning to Denmark, where he served a parish until his retirement in 1942 and where he died in 1953. At his request, his ashes were returned to Nebraska and interred in the Nysted Cemetery. For a time, members of St. Peder's Lutheran Church attempted to sponsor retreats, using the folk high school buildings that were rapidly falling into disrepair. Finally, the property was sold to the Western Conference of Evangelical Wesleyan, a breakaway Methodist group who continues to use the site several weeks each summer for church camps.

#### BRORSON HIGH SCHOOL

The history of Brorson High School and Danish settlement in North Dakota parallels the story of earlier settlement on the Nebraska prairies. While the Danish community in Howard County resulted from the efforts of the secular Danish Land and Homestead Company of Waukesha, Wisconsin, the North Dakota settlement represented the only formal attempt by the United Church to establish a colony. It was led by Pastor Hans Hansen, the same man who had organized congregations in Howard County and founded Dannebrog College, and who later served as president of the Blair Church until the formation of the United Church in 1896. During the annual convention of the Blair Church in 1895, delegates discussed the high cost of land in established communities and the difficulties faced by recent immigrants and second-generation members of the church in finding affordable farms. Establishing a colony would provide economic possibilities for church members while creating new mission opportunities, and so official action was taken to establish a "Colonization Committee."<sup>22</sup> Hansen, who was serving a well-established parish in Hutchinson, Minnesota, volunteered to lead an exploratory



trip to western North Dakota, where the Soo Railroad Company was constructing a line northwest to the Canadian prairie and where both homestead and railroad land were available.

In the summer of 1896, Hansen and twelve other church members traveled to Kenmare, North Dakota, a newly platted community along the railroad line, sixty miles northwest of Minot and twenty miles south of the Canadian border. There they homesteaded on land northwest of Kenmare, and on 14 October 1896, organized the first Danish Lutheran congregation in North Dakota, Trinity Lutheran Church.<sup>23</sup> Shortly thereafter, congregations were established in the nearby communities of Bowbells and Flaxton. Census records indicate rapid growth. In 1890 there were six Danish-born inhabitants in Ward County in which Kenmare was located. By 1900 this number had swelled to 485, and there were more than 1,000 inhabitants of Danish heritage. In 1910, Burke County, which lay adjacent to Ward County and included the towns of Bowbells and Flaxton, was organized. The 1910 census indicated that Burke County had 303 Danish-born inhabitants and Ward County 441.<sup>24</sup> Rapid growth in settlement created the need for additional congregations and a school. A church building for Trinity Lutheran Church was dedicated in 1900, and by the following year five additional congregations had been organized in the area extending north to Flaxton.

In 1901 Pastor Hansen organized the school that was to become Brorson High School. During the first winters, classes were held in the parsonage and then in an addition to the church. As in the folk high school at Nysted, Hansen's purpose was initially to provide education to the many young men who had come to the area to work on the farms. However, both young men and women from the area also attended. Henry N. Hansen, who was later ordained and served parishes in the United Church, described attending the school. His narrative provides insight into the conditions under which teachers and students labored and the school's religious tone.

During the winter months of 1903-04, I attended a school conducted by our pastor. It was in a room built to the east end of Trinity church. This was used as classroom. Miss A. (Arildsen) from C.F. (Cedar Falls, Iowa) was our teacher. She taught the elementary subjects, while the pastor taught Danish grammar, reading and church history as well as religion. Here for the first time in my life, I heard the Catechism taught in the English language. . . . Miss A. did a blessed work among the young people in our church. Indeed it was "rough" material. Most of us had but very little schooling. I remember her fine christian spirit. Her heart burned for the salvation of our souls. She organized a choir. Many of the old danish hymns became familiar thru her efforts.<sup>25</sup>

By 1905 it was clear there was need for a building to house the school. In the spring of that year, members of what was now the North Dakota District of the United Church successfully raised \$7,000 in cash and subscriptions, and a three-story wood framed building was completed in time for the beginning of the winter term of 1905, when fifty students were enrolled.<sup>26</sup> In the basement was a kitchen, dining room, and furnace room with coal-fired steam heat. On the main floor were classrooms, a large hall, and an apartment for the principal. The second and third floors provided residential space for forty students.<sup>27</sup> Since the school terms lasted from mid-November through mid-March, the building was used for other meetings and courses the rest of the year. In 1906 and 1912 the United Church held its annual conventions at the school, suggesting the importance the school and the North Dakota District had already come to play in the larger church body (see Fig. 2).

The school was officially named Brorson High School at the time of its dedication in 1905. Pastor P. M. Petersen, Hansen's colleague who served the congregation in Flaxton, had suggested the school be named for Hans Adolph Brorson, a Danish bishop and hymn



FIG. 2. Delegates to the sixteenth annual convention of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1912 at Brorson High School. Courtesy of the Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa.

writer who lived in Denmark from 1694 to 1764.<sup>28</sup> Brorson, who had served as bishop of Ribe, a diocese on the west coast of the Jutland peninsula, had been influenced by seventeenth-century German pietism. As Grundtvig's thought and belief clearly influenced teaching at the folk high schools, Brorson's hymns and published sermons inspired the pietist tendencies of the United Church. The fact that the name of the school did not include the word "folk," though the curricular model was similar, suggests again the deep division between Grundtvigians and pietists. Members of the United Church believed that the folk high schools focused too much on contemporary issues and the "folk" aspects of Danish culture to the detriment of Bible study and developing a deep personal faith. Table 3

lists the enrollments and principals of Brorson High School during the years of its existence.

Among those who played a seminal role in teaching, attracting students to the school, and fund-raising was Jens Dixen, a tile layer, lay preacher, and missionary (see Fig. 3). Dixen, who had been born in 1858 in a part of southern Jutland that came under Prussian influence after the Dano-Prussian War of 1864 and was not returned to Denmark until 1920, had immigrated to Denmark in 1875 to avoid military service in the Prussian army. In 1880 he immigrated to the United States, finally settling near Coulter, Iowa, in 1881. On first arriving in the United States, Dixen had joined the Danish Church, which, as explained above, reflected Grundtvigian theology. However, in 1884, at a revival meeting at which a

TABLE 3

## ANNUAL ENROLLMENTS AND PRINCIPALS AT BRORSON HIGH SCHOOL

Year	Enrollment	Principal
1901-2	Unreported	Hans Hansen
1902-3	15	Hans Hansen
1903-4	Unreported	Hans Hansen
1904-5	Unreported	Hans Hansen
1905-6	50	Jens Dixen (manager/teacher)
1906-7	Unreported	Jens Dixen (manager/teacher)
1907-8	Unreported	J.P. Nielsen
1908-9	22	J.P. Nielsen
1909-10	47	J.J. Kildsig (Jens Dixen, manager/teacher)
1910-11	44	J.J. Kildsig (Jens Dixen, manager/teacher)
1911-12	Unreported	J.J. Kildsig (Jens Dixen, manager/teacher)
1912-13	49	J.J. Kildsig (Jens Dixen, manager/teacher)
1913-14	37	J.J. Kildsig (Jens Dixen, manager/teacher)
1914-15	44	C.E. Nielsen
1915-16	38	J.A. Larsen
1916-17	19	J.A. Larsen
1917-19	Closed due to the war and poor harvests.	
1919-20	27	J. Knudsen
1920-21	No classes for lack of principal.	
1921-22	No classes for lack of principal. (James Lund was to serve as principal.)	

Note: All the principals except for Jens Dixen also served as pastors of Trinitatis [Trinity] Lutheran Church in rural Kenmare. Organized in 1896, the congregation was the first Danish Lutheran church organized in North Dakota.

Source: *Beretninger om Den forenede danske evangelisk-lutherske Kirke's Aarsmød* (Annual reports of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church) (Blair, Nebr.: Danish Lutheran Publishing House, 1901-22).

young Swedish minister preached on the text "Ye must be born again," Dixen experienced a reawakening. In a passage from his diary that is reminiscent of Martin Luther's decision to enter the priesthood, he described that on the way home from this meeting in the midst of

lightning and thunder, he heard his calling. Though he had received no formal education beyond the parish school in Roibøl, he began reading widely, particularly the writings of P. C. Trandberg, a Danish immigrant seminary professor who was a fervent advocate of the



pietist stance. Through Trandberg, Dixen was also exposed to the writings of Søren Kierkegaard, who influenced him and whom he was often later to quote both in his speaking and writing.<sup>29</sup> This reawakening also led Dixen to leave the Danish Church and join the United Church, largely due to its emphasis on mission work. Beginning in 1889 Dixen would spend the winters traveling to Danish American communities to preach. Ultimately this led to church-supported missionary trips in 1903 and from 1907 to 1909, when Dixen circled the globe, preaching to Danes who had settled in South Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1929, after years of traveling, Dixen returned to Denmark, where he died on 12 January 1931.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1901 and 1914, however, Kenmare, North Dakota, was the center of Dixen's life and work. In 1901 he left Coulter, Iowa, to homestead in the community that Pastor Hans Hansen and other members of the United Church had founded. Here, during the winters, he assisted Hansen in teaching, and from 1905 to 1907 and again from 1909 to 1914, he taught and managed Brorson High School. That Dixen was a powerful presence in student lives is clear from Henry N. Hansen's description of him.

The influence of Dixen on us students was tremendous. He led us into the Word of God. He could tell Bible Stories as no one else. He also told of his travels. He had visited most of the Lutheran Mission fields. Missionary characters were made alive to us. He also taught us Danish composition. He was a many sided man. A hard worker indeed, a ditch digger from Iowa. He kept us spellbound, when he preached and lectured. We all loved him, yet we were a bit fearful at times, he might become too personal. His eyes could penetrate into the innermost parts of our being. And he could talk to us personally about Jesus and our relationship to Him. He had an austere personality, yet when we learned to know



FIG. 3. Jens Dixen. Courtesy of the Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa.

him better, he became a real pal full of fun. We young people took to him.<sup>31</sup>

Brorson High School flourished from 1905 to 1916, and especially during those years when Dixen was present. In 1908, while he was away on one of his missionary trips, enrollment slipped to twenty-two students, but on his return enrollment figures once again climbed. Between 1909 and 1914 the principal of Brorson High School was Pastor Jens Jensen Kildsig. In many ways, Kildsig and Dixen were kindred spirits. Kildsig, who immigrated to America in 1878, had studied at the seminary operated by the pietist P. C. Trandberg, whose writings had influenced Dixen.<sup>32</sup> Together, and with the assistance of a number of young teachers, these two men were to shape the lives of

many young men who were to become pastors within the United Church.

It is clear from the curriculum that the Bible and biblical authority were stressed at Brorson High School. Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, in his study *Kampen om Danskheden* (The Struggle over Danish Cultural Identity), rightly characterizes Brorson more as a Bible school than as a folk school in the Grundtvigian tradition, since greater emphasis was placed on evangelism and inspiring an active Christian life.<sup>33</sup> And yet student letters suggest that the curriculum also focused on traditional academic subjects as well. Ethan Mengers, who was to become a professor at Trinity Seminary in Blair (the only seminary of the United Church) and later, after the 1960 merger forming the American Lutheran Church, at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, was a student at Brorson during the 1913-14 winter term. Writing to his sister in February, he described his classes: "Yesterday and today there have been mission meetings here. Fridays I have Danish that includes reading, composition, grammar, as well as vocabulary and spelling. I also have church history before that. I also took gymnastics. Next week I have penmanship and music as well as all the lectures, devotions, etc."<sup>34</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that while gymnastics was a part of the curriculum, there was no folk dancing, which a student could expect to find at the Grundtvigian-inspired folk high schools. It is one of those details that suggests the reason Danish American Lutherans referred to the Grundtvigians as the "dancing" or "happy" Danes, while the members of the United Church were called the "praying" or "holy" Danes.

Despite the departure of both Kildsig and Dixon in 1914, the school continued to do well for two years. However, in 1916 conditions began to deteriorate in large measure due to weather in the Great Plains. Brief entries in the annual church reports tell the story. "Brorson High School student enrollment was not as large during the winter of 1916-1917 as it was accustomed to being and this was no doubt due to the poor harvest and the hail-

storms in the North Dakota District last year."<sup>35</sup> "Brorson High School has been closed this year (1917-1918) because of the war and poor harvest. When it can open again is difficult to say."<sup>36</sup> As World War I drew to an end, plans were made to reopen, but they came to nothing until December 1919. Pastor Jens Knudsen wrote what was to become the school's final report.

After Brorson High School on account of the war had been closed for two years, the District decided to open the school and have it open for 13 weeks. The school opened on the 1st of December 1919, and held classes until the 1st of March 1920. Due to the poor harvest in this area last year, many students could not afford to attend. Counting the music students who all do not live at the school, there were 27 students. We had three teachers at the school. Mr. Oscar Petersen, Miss M. Gissel, and Miss Hedvig Knudsen. Oscar Petersen and Miss Knudsen taught the general English school subjects; Petersen also taught mission history and gymnastics. Miss M. Gissel taught singing and music. I have taught Bible history . . . and Bible study two hours daily; I also gave 35 lectures over church history, Bible history and mission history as well as ethics. . . . The school is without debt and despite the difficult times, financial expectations are good.<sup>37</sup>

Contrary to Knudsen's hopeful words, Brorson High School did not open the next year for lack of a principal, and though the North Dakota District appointed Pastor James Lund to serve in that position for the 1921-22 term, "due to pressing times too few students enrolled to open the school."<sup>38</sup> The inability to open the school resulted finally in the sale of the building to the Trinity congregation for parish use. As the economic depression that began in rural areas during the mid-1920s gripped the Northern Plains, the once-proud symbol of the North Dakota District stood vacant, and in 1941 it was torn down.<sup>39</sup> In its

nearly twenty years of existence, however, almost 500 students had attended Brorson High School. Twenty-five of these students went on to be ordained and served the United Church as ministers and three became missionaries, serving in Africa.<sup>40</sup> The spiritual ideals that had inspired the school were carried on in the work of these students.

Among former members of the two Danish Lutheran synods, the memories of Nysted Folk High School and Brorson High School loom large. At annual meetings held at Danebod Folk School in Tyler, Minnesota, and in Solvang, California, individuals still gather who had family who attended the Nysted Folk High School. During the summer of 2003 at the annual reunion of members of the United Church, held at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, the program focused on Jens Dixen and Brorson High School. But this group of individuals is rapidly dwindling.

These two schools were hopeful attempts by Danish immigrants to establish institutions in the Great Plains where their young people could grow in knowledge of their faith and cultural heritage. Despite the hard work of dedicated teachers, pastors, and community members, environmental forces and pressures on succeeding generations to assimilate were too great. With the close of Brorson High School in 1920 and Nysted Folk High School in 1934, the Great Plains, that she-monster of Ole Rølvaag's novel *Giants in the Earth*, had claimed the blood of two more victims.

## NOTES

1. At the time of their merger with other Lutheran synods in the early 1960s, three histories were written examining the experiences of Danish Lutheran immigrants in the United States. These are Paul C. Nyholm, *The Americanization of the Danish Lutheran Churches in America* (Copenhagen: Institute for Church History, 1963); John M. Jensen, *The United Evangelical Lutheran Church: An Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964); and Enok Mortensen, *The Danish Lutheran Church in America: The History and Heritage of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church of America Board

of Publications, 1967). The most recent Danish study is Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, *Kampen om Danskheden: Tro og nationalitet i de danske kirkesamfund i Amerika* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1990). For brief English summaries of Hanne Sanders's Swedish dissertation treating the socioeconomic status of Danish pietists, see John R. Christianson, "Danish Emigrants: Winners or Losers?" *The Bridge* 22, no. 1-2 (1999): 22-41, and Hanne Sanders, "Peasant Revivalism and Secularization: Protestant Popular Culture in Denmark and Sweden, 1820-1850" (a dissertation summary), *The Bridge* 22, no. 1-2 (1999): 42-50.

2. Jensen, *ibid.*, p. 9.

3. Comprehensive introductions to the life and work of N. F. S. Grundtvig are available in Hal Koch, *N. F. S. Grundtvig* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1959), and P. H. Traustedt, *Dansk litteratur historie* (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1967). English studies, including a bibliography in English, can be found in N. F. S. Grundtvig: *Tradition and Renewal: Grundtvig's Vision of Man and People, Education and the Church in Relation to World Issues Today* (Copenhagen: Det danske Selskab, 1983), and *Grundtvig's Ideas in North America: Influences and Parallels* (Copenhagen: Det danske Selskab, 1983).

4. Holger Begtrup, *Det danske Folks Historie i det 19 Aarhundrede*, 2d ed. (Copenhagen: n.p., 1916), p. 314, quoted in Mortensen, *Danish Lutheran Church in America* (note 1 above), p. 12.

5. English translations of many of Grundtvig's writings on education and his proposal to the government for a revision in the curriculum at Sorø Academy can be found in Harold Judd Alford's "A History of Residential Adult Education" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1966), pp. 321-417.

6. Enok Mortensen, who attended Nysted Folkehøjskole, taught at several folk high schools and was responsible for renovating Danebod Folk High School in Tyler, Minnesota, has written extensively on the Danish folk school movement in the United States. See Enok Mortensen, *Schools for Life: The Grundtvigian Schools in America* (Askov, Minn. Danish-American Heritage Society, 1977); *Danish Lutheran Church in America* (note 1 above), pp. 84-89; and "Grundtvig's Influence on American Education" in *Grundtvig's Ideas in North America* (note 3 above), pp. 122-31. For an early Danish summary of the folk high school experience in America, written to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the first school in Elk Horn, Iowa, and including description of the school at Nysted, see A. Bobjerg, *De danske Højskoler i Amerika: 1878-1903* (Kolding, Denmark: Konrad Jørgensens Bogtrykkeri, n.d.).

7. For the most recent and extensive treatment of this period in the establishment of Danish com-



munities in Howard County, see Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, *Dannebrog på den amerikanske prærie*. Fynske Studier 19. (Odense, Denmark: Odense By Museer, 2000), pp. 111-35. A brief overview of settlement in Nebraska can be found in George R. Nielsen, *The Danish Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), pp. 136-41.

8. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. *United States Historical Census Data Browser*. Database online. Updated 2 January 2003; retrieved 26 January 2003, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/>.

9. Frederick Hale, *Danes in North America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), pp. 37-38.

10. Mortensen, *Schools for Life* (note 6 above), p. 58.

11. Alfred C. Nielsen, *Life in an American Denmark* (Askov, Minn.: American Publishing Co., 1962), p. 85.

12. Nielsen, *ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

13. *Højskolen for den Dansk-Amerikanske Ungdom* (Nysted, Nebr.: n.p., n.d. [1902]), p. 5. Located in envelope "Nysted I" of the Danish Immigrant Archive, Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.

14. Extensive excerpts of these letters were translated by Otto Høiherg, C. P.'s youngest son, who shared them with the Centennial Committee for publication in their centennial history of St. Peder's Lutheran Church in Nysted. Otto G. Høiherg, "The Højbjerg Years at Nysted: 1907-1912," in *St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1883-1983* (Cairo, Nebr.: Record Printing Co., 1983), pp. 26-29.

15. Mortensen, *Schools for Life* (note 6 above), p. 69.

16. Quoted in Mortensen, *ibid.*, p. 71.

17. Gudrun Hansen Nielsen, letter to her father, 14 May 1922, Collection CHH-2002, Box 1, Packet 2, Letter 10, Danish Immigrant Archive, Dana College, Blair, Nebr.

18. For discussions on the relationship between the Danish folk high school movement, other folk schools, and Elderhostel, see John Mark Nielsen, "Tracing Threads: N. F. S. Grundtvig, the Danish Folk High School Movement, and the Elderhostel Experience," in *Nordics in America: The Future of Their Past*, ed. Odd S. Lovoll (Northfield, Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1993.), pp. 37-46; and Myles Horton, "Influences on Highlander Research and Education Center, New Market Tennessee, USA," Mortensen, "Grundtvig's Influence on American Education," and K. Patricia Cross, "Threads of Grundtvig in the Fabric of Adult Education in the United States," all in *Grundtvig's Ideas in North America* (note 3 above), pp. 17-31, 122-32, and 157-61.

19. *Nysted People's College* (Dannebrog, Nebr.: n.p., n.d. [1932]), n.p. (3-4). Located in envelope "Nysted I" of the Danish Immigrant Archive, Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. (10-11).

21. *Ibid.*, pp. (8-9).

22. George R. Nielsen, *The Danish Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), p. 147.

23. Kirsten and Knud Madsen, *Han Sled Bibler Som Sko: Bogen om Jens Diken og hans landsmænd i det fjerne* (Copenhagen: Forlaget Savanne, 1995), pp. 32-33, and Jensen, *United Evangelical Lutheran Church* (note 1 above), pp. 136-37.

24. Inter-university Consortium, *US Census Data Browser* (note 8 above).

25. Henry N. Hansen, *Memoir*, typewritten manuscript, Collection HNH-992, Box 1, chap. 3, p. 2), Danish Immigrant Archive, Dana College, Blair, Nebr.

26. Jens Diken, "Brev fra Jens Diken," *Luthersk Ugeblad* 10, no. 48 (25 November 1930): 6.

27. "Brorson Højskole," in *Danske i Amerika*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: C. Rasmussen Co., 1907-16), pp. 143-44.

28. Diken, "Jens Diken" (note 26 above), p. 6.

29. Madsen, *Han Sled Bibler Som Sko* (note 23 above), pp. 11, 21-23.

30. Madsen, *ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

31. Hansen, *Memoir* (note 25 above), p. 3.

32. Jensen, *United Evangelical Lutheran Church* (note 1 above), pp. 286-87.

33. Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, *Kampen om Danskheden: Tro og nationalitet i det danske kirkesamfund i Amerika* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1990.), pp. 130-31.

34. Ethan Mengers, letter to his sister, 19 February 1914, Collection HAN-988, Box 28, Packet 2, Letter 34, Danish Immigrant Archive, Dana College, Blair, Nebr.

35. *Beretning om Den forenede danske evangelisk-lutherske Kirke's enogtyvende Aarsmøde*. 1917, p. 66. (Reports of the Annual Meetings of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church) (Blair, Nebr.: Danish Lutheran Publishing House).

36. *Beretning om Den forenede danske evangelisk-lutherske Kirke's toogtyvende Aarsmøde*, 1918, p. 17.

37. J. Knudsen, "Indberetning fra Brorson Højskole," in *Beretning om Den forenede danske evangelisk-lutherske Kirke's fireogtyvende Aarsmøde*, 1920, p. 84.

38. *Beretning om Den forenede danske evangelisk-lutherske Kirke's seksogtyvende Aarsmøde*, 1922, p. 29.

39. Madsen, *Han Sled Bibler Som Sko* (note 24 above), p. 54.

40. Diken, "Jens Diken" (note 26 above), p. 7, and Jensen, *United Evangelical Lutheran Church* (note 1 above), p. 136.

# REVIEW ESSAY

*Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections.* Edited by Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden, and Susanne Zantop. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xii + 352 pp. Photographs, maps, tables, bibliography, index. \$75.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

## DO GERMANS REALLY LOVE INDIANS?

"Of all Europeans, the German has the greatest love for the Indian." This 1939 quote from a German novelist, reproduced in the book's introductory chapter by Christian Feest, could serve as the motto for the 1999 conference ("Germans and Indians/Indians and Germans: Cultural Encounters across Three Centuries") held at Dartmouth College, from which this book evolved. The idea that Germans have a special affinity with Indians is a long-standing conviction that is, nonetheless, difficult to prove. But the converse, that Indians might have a special affinity for Germans, was disproven by the conference itself: only a few Native American scholars were found to take part. "Why, after all, *should* Native Americans be interested in Germans?" asks Susanne Zantop, herself a German, in the introduction. And so it was that German and American scholars from various disciplines had the conference almost entirely to themselves, with Native American participation limited to discussion periods. In order to include Native American voices in this publication, however, the editors have "framed" the volume with stories about Germans that appear in the works of Emma Lee Warrior (Peigan Blackfoot) and Louise Erdrich (of Ojibwa and German origin).

In his introductory essay, "Germany's Indians in a European Perspective," Feest provides an overview of Indian-related activities by Germans in America and in Germany, reaching far back into history because the fate of

the Germanic tribes during Roman times has often been compared to that of the North American Indians. Further on in his essay, Feest argues—in contrast to other contributors to this volume—that people in different European countries identify similarly with Indians, the presumed special German affinity with Indians being above all a question of scholarly interest and publication activity, larger in Germany than other European countries. Feest is surely correct as long as the term "Indians" is used to describe only "real" Native Americans. But, as we shall see further on, fictional characters like Karl May's Winnetou have much deeper emotional resonance and are more commercially successful in German-speaking countries than in the rest of Europe.

The essays in the following section, "Historical Encounters," confirm Feest's view about the relationship between "real Germans" and "real Indians." In his historical overview, Colin Calloway discusses various themes, from "Germans in Indian Country" and "Show Indians in Germany" to "Indian Soldiers in Two World Wars," and comes to a similar conclusion when he writes: "Unlike the Spanish, French, British, or Americans, Germans did not enter Indian country as members of a colonizing nation, but they participated in the colonizing process. . . . [R]elations between Indian people and German people seem to have been not much different from those

between Indians and other groups of Europeans" (77).

This idea is also expressed in "American Indians and Moravians in Southern New England," by Corinna Dally-Starna and William A. Starna, as well as in Liam Riordan's "The Complexion of My Country': The German as 'Other' in Colonial Pennsylvania" and Russel Lawrence Barsh's "German Immigrants and Inter-marriage with American Indians in the Pacific Northwest." Nowhere can it be seen that Germans behaved differently with Indians than did colonists or missionaries from other countries. But in "A Nineteenth-Century Ojibwa Conquers Germany," a fascinating essay on George Copway, Bernd Peyer notes that the Ojibwa statesman was greeted by the German delegation more enthusiastically than by others at the Third World Peace Congress, held in Frankfurt in August, 1850. Copway "consciously acted the part of the romantic noble savage in this controversial gathering" and was viewed by some critics "as a tractable symbol for the illusionary position of the entire peace movement" (148).

The book's third section, "Projections and Performances," begins with an essay by Hartmut Lutz on "German Indianthusiasm." This term illuminates the true nature of Germans' infatuation with Indians: the heroes of their dreams are not *real* Indians, but fictional ones. Germans don't go into raptures over Sitting Bull, Geronimo, or Chief Joseph, but over Winnetou, the Super-Indian, who is not only good-looking, but brings countless Western desperadoes to justice with the help of his *German* blood-brother Old Shatterhand. The figure of Winnetou, created by German adventure novel writer Karl May, has become so deeply rooted in German collective consciousness that he is more authentic to most Germans than any real Indian. As Lutz emphasizes, the belief in a "German-Indian brotherhood" was misused in the Third Reich for propaganda purposes, most notably in books for young readers: "Such ideologized books, ostensibly about Indian history, were used to mentally prepare young people for the war to

establish a Greater Germany, a *Grossdeutsches Reich*, and even for systematic genocide against 'inferior' races" (179).

In his essay on "Nineteenth-Century German Representations of Indians," Jeffrey L. Sammons examines the work of German novelists Charles Sealsfield, Balduin Möllhausen, Friedrich Gerstäcker, and Karl May. While the first three have fallen into neglect in the twentieth century, the influence of Karl May remains strong even today. "A German obsession with Indians has been notorious for decades. . . . There seems to be a longing to act out an exotic, utopian identity, relieved of modern alienation and unburdened by the complicities of culture and civilization. Perhaps Germany's Indians have been entirely absorbed by fictionality . . ." (191-92).

Karl Markus Kreis's contribution, in contrast, deals with "real" Indians in Germany, and with "real" German missionaries in Indian country. In the first part Kreis analyzes the enthusiastic reaction of the German press to Indians playing Indians (from Buffalo Bill's Wild West show to the Indians in the German circus Sarrasani); in the second he looks at the paternalistic role of the Jesuit Missions in South Dakota, where many Germans lived and worked.

The theme of "Playing Indian" is explored further by Yurok filmmaker Marta Carlson. In 1999 she visited Germany and witnessed with disdain German hobbyists acting out their fantasies in carefully reconstructed Indian costumes. In her view, German hobbyists appropriate American Indian culture and spirituality through their club practices. Her resulting film is meant "to investigate and expose the troubling and dangerous aspects of these practices . . ." (213). She describes the different approaches of the former West German and East German hobbyists, but is not able to investigate the common roots of the German hobbyist tradition, which spring from the late nineteenth century. She sees this hobby as a form of racial consumption and comes to the rather harsh conclusion: "What all of these hobbyists are doing is making entertainment



out of genocide" (215). Carlson is apparently unaware that Indian hobbyists in other European countries do more or less the same thing, and, in addition, that Indian hobbyism in America is not significantly different—in fact, that hobbyists there hold occasional gatherings with Indians on reservations (for example, International Brotherhood Days, held annually on the Pine Ridge reservation).

What is Indian hobbyism in Germany? It is basically a reenactment of the rather peaceful time of the fur trade in the upper Missouri area between 1820 and 1870. It is part of the even more popular Western hobby in Germany and therefore includes interaction with fur traders, mountain men, Mexican vaqueros, cowboys, and the US cavalry. The most important activities during the large yearly councils are trading, showing off self-made costumes, and acting out Plains Indian societies' activities as they are described, for example, in the travel report of the German prince Maximilian zu Wied. In these camps of nearly 2,000 participants, a certain "tribal" structure is created which is, however, usually superseded by a typical German clubbiness. A minority of hobbyists have also been influenced by esotericism, practicing the "Indian way" as a spiritual exercise.

The essay by Katrin Sieg, "Indian Impersonation as Historical Surrogation," is also concerned with German Indian hobbyism. Several books and articles have already been written on the German hobbyist scene, as well as magazines and books by hobby groups themselves, which provide valuable insights into the development of this phenomenon. Unfortunately, Sieg ignores these sources, instead interviewing a few individual club members whose views cannot be seen as representative of the approximately 5,000 Indian hobbyists active in Germany today. The result is a gross misrepresentation of German Indian hobbyism. Especially distressing is her unbalanced use of interview material from her primary informant, Curt Dietrich Asten of Berlin. In her zeal to uncover the racist roots of German hobbyism, she devotes almost four pages to a

minute psychoanalysis of his character. Additionally, Asten claims that Sieg has misrepresented him, either printing words attributed to him which he never said, or taking them entirely out of context (Curt Dietrich Asten, personal communication with Peter Bolz, November 2002). The author has such fixed ideas about German hobbyism that she attempts, in absurd fashion, to paint the entire hobby movement as something close to fascism. The ridiculing attitude of her article may be meant to sympathize with Native Americans, but it contributes little or nothing to the scholarly analysis of German Indian hobbyism.

This section concludes with Gerd Gemünden's brilliant analysis of East German Indian movies, "Between Karl May and Karl Marx: The DEFA *Indianerfilme*." The success of the Karl May movies in West Germany in the 1960s sparked a similar Indian movie-making effort in the socialist East. "The exclusive focus on Native Americans was at the time without parallel in film history; it allowed for a historical accuracy that most Hollywood films had always lacked," Gemünden writes (245). But because the East German government saw itself as an adversary of the American capitalist system, these films were required to contain a socialist message, portrayed through unrealistic "good" Indian versus "bad" white guy plots beyond anthropological credibility (248).

The two literary contributions to the book, by Emma Lee Warrior and Louise Erdrich, offer an interesting glimpse from "the other side." Over centuries of contact, Indians have experienced Germans as missionaries, explorers, settlers, farmers, schoolteachers, and, more rarely, outsiders who have, for one reason or another, become part of Native American communities as adopted tribal members. The selections presented here explore two extremes of this last "type": the German as cunning captive who earns his way to a position of respect in the community, and the German as unwelcome interloper, an arrogant "wannabe" disliked by most tribal members (except presumably his long-suffering wife), who supports

himself by writing and selling books on traditional Indian culture.

Warrior's Helmut Walking Eagle character is an extravagantly negative, paperdoll cutout of the Bad German, a flat character rendered with a minimum of humor. "Compatriots," the short story in which he appears, was first published in 1990, which may mean it was one of the first pieces of contemporary Indian fiction to broach the highly-charged subject of "whiteshamanism," the white appropriation of Native American spiritual practices. Despite its one-dimensional characterization of Walking Eagle, the story has merit based on its bold content: Warrior was exposing emotional currents that run deep in reservation communities, as rituals like Sun Dances are increasingly taken over by non-Indians (witness the controversial 1997 *Indian Country Today* series on white participation in Lakota Sun Dance ceremonies that generated heated discussions on reservations). An accompanying essay by Renate Eigenbrod critically analyzes "Compatriots" in conjunction with two indigenous Canadian texts in which German characters appear. These German characters, Eigenbrod says, tend to reveal "two opposite ways of appreciating 'a culture that is not your own culture': celebration and appropriation" (269). They also set in relief the indigenous characters' own explorations of identity.

Louise Erdrich's contribution, from her 1998 novel, *The Antelope Wife*, presents the much more likeable character of Klaus Shawano, a German prisoner-of-war in Minnesota who is somehow spirited out of the prison camp by local Ojibwa wanting to avenge the death of a relative at German hands in World War II. Shawano saves himself through his skills in the kitchen, baking the most wonderful cake the men have ever tasted, a cake that becomes a tribal legend and a part of the tribal diet. Shawano himself goes on to become an accepted member of the community, and his unusual initiation a humorous piece of tribal lore. As essayist Ute Lischke-McNab notes, the communally-shared cake is a brilliant metaphor for the positive forms of shar-

ing that can take place between different cultures. In other works, including the more recent *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, Erdrich continues her deep and sensitive probing of the cross-cultural relations between her Ojibwa community and the various Germans who ended up making that cold lake country their home.

The various contributions in this book reveal that people in German-speaking countries share stereotypes about Native Americans that unfortunately are common throughout the world, and that their behavior toward "real" Indians in the colonizing process was no different from the behavior of other European nations. If Gerd Gemünden, for example, comes to the conclusion that in Germany "there exists a common, widespread, and existential identification with Indians that seems to surpass that of other nations" (254), then his conclusion stems from his analysis of German Indian movies, not from a representative questionnaire examining German attitudes toward real Native Americans. For the average nineteenth-century reader, information about Indians was available only through fiction. As Feest (37) demonstrates, a German tradition of Indian fiction writing existed long before Karl May; he simply brought this "Indianthusiasm" to a climax through the invention of Winnetou. This *literary* Indian fiction wave lasted until the 1960s, when it was supplanted by a *visual* Indian fiction wave, in the form of the West German Winnetou movies and the East German Indian films. The especially successful Karl May films (produced in Yugoslavia with a French actor in the role of Winnetou) released a stream of merchandizing in which the romance of the American West was sold to the German public. This new form of "Indiancommercializing" has been particularly lucrative in association with the numerous Karl May festivals that have sprung up in the past few decades on open-air stages around Germany. Indian plays are shown there alongside fantasy "Wild West towns," where Indian kitsch of every description is offered to the "Indian-loving" German visitor, in addi-

tion to a briskly growing market in Indian esoterica—Indian horoscopes, tarot cards, dream catchers, and so on. These German Indian fantasies are acted out on the lowest cultural and intellectual level and have nothing whatever to do with the life and culture of real Native Americans. The most well-known of these stages is in Bad Segeberg, where in 1986 “Indiancommercializing” was ratcheted up a notch by including “real” Indians in the proceedings. The Winnebago spiritual leader Reuben A. Snake from Nebraska was invited to participate in the making of a “peace treaty” and presented to 10,000 enthusiastic German spectators as the “Chief of all Chiefs of the North American Indians” (Reinhard Marheinecke and Nicolas Finke, *Karl May am Kalkberg. Geschichte und Geschichten der Karl-May-Spiele Bad Segeberg seit 1952* [Bamberg and Radebeul: Karl-May-Verlag, 1999], 240).

The German people certainly love Winnetou and other fictional Indians who embody an idealized image handed down to them

from fictional fantasies of the past two hundred years. But they have little concept of or interest in real Native Americans of either the past or present. For their knowledge of the Indian past, they are happy to substitute clichés from Karl May stories. In contemporary times, Native Americans seem to interest Germans only if they can sell them a spiritual experience, either here in Germany or on the numerous Plains reservations across the central United States and Canada. Therefore, it was no surprise that last summer a “Sun Dance” was held near Berlin under the leadership of Blackfoot from the Peigan reserve in Alberta, the most recent form of “Indiancommercializing” in Germany to date.

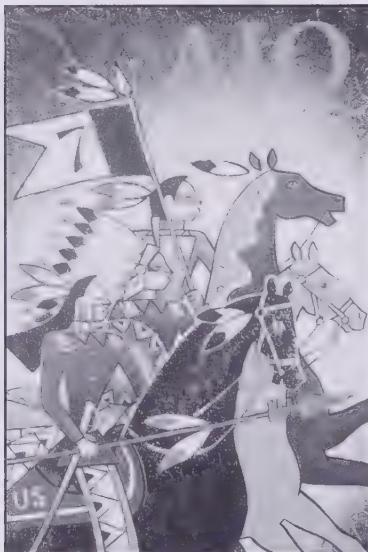
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*. Edited by Gretchen M. Bataille. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. x + 266 pp. \$80.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

"The misrepresentation, commodification, and distortion of indigenous identities have existed from the moment of first contact" between Native peoples and Europeans, editor Gretchen Bataille observes in the introduction to *Native American Representations*. The problems are familiar to literary scholars: power relations produced by colonization determine who has the authority to represent Native peoples in the broader culture, and these representations in turn tend to reinforce European dominance and to obfuscate the violence, and even the fact, of colonization. The questions of how Native peoples have been represented throughout the centuries of colonialism, by whom, and for what purposes comprise the focus of this anthology. Most of its contributors analyze the problems raised by historical and contemporary representations in a series of essays that examine a range of interdisciplinary materials including postcolonial theory, WPA papers of the 1930s, popular films, and the production of collaborative personal narratives. Other contributors examine the ways in which Native thinkers and scholars engage and contest conventional representations, defining their societies and cultures on their own terms and providing critical perspectives on European colonization in such forms as fiction, oral histories, films, and traditional stories. The contributors are newer as well as established scholars in Native American stud-

ies, including Native writers Katherine Shanley and Louis Owens. Together, they aim both to provide critical perspectives on conventional representations and, in some cases, to offer challenging alternatives more consistent with the concerns of Native communities.

The essays cover a wide range of subjects that focus for the most part on the twentieth century, and they include a number of topics that have already received scholarly attention as well as more original and innovative studies. Because one of the goals of *Native American Representations* is to examine critically who has the authority to represent Native peoples, a subject that has also been the focus of recent debates in the field, the collection would have been strengthened by more contributions by Native scholars and a greater emphasis on Native perspectives. In addition, the collection as a whole (with a couple of notable exceptions) is remarkably inattentive to images and voices of Native women, even though the silencing and marginalization of Native women is one consequence of the colonial processes that the volume seeks to criticize. Overall, however, *Native American Representations* provides a valuable addition to the growing body of scholarship in the field on the complicated relationships among race, colonialism, and representation.

SHARI HUHN DORF  
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*Feathering Custer*. By W. S. Penn. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. 240 pp. Notes. \$35.00.

William S. Penn (Nez Perce) has compiled a series of essays that twirl through problems concerning Native American studies in academia. In "Paving with Good Intentions" and elsewhere, Penn takes aim at popular critical theory that cannot adequately conceptualize Native thought, identity, or writing. Throughout, he advocates careful scrutiny of elements of identity arising from forces outside of Indian culture.

In Kenneth Burke's metaphor comparing the field of cultural criticism to a parlor discussion, Penn sees much of what limits the study: the conversation quashes dissent and honors hegemony; the conversers privilege the written over the oral and are almost exclusively white and Christian. In "Leaving the Parlor," he advocates moving the entire business outside, into the open air where those formerly excluded from the long-running discourse might drop by without an invitation. The essay "In the Gazebo" offers an excellent and thorough reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* employing a conception of time rooted in oral culture (as opposed to "Euramerican" culture) and illuminates the novel's circuitously spiral structure. The framework of *Feathering Custer* itself approximates this inclusive strategy: Penn's elusive approach, combining close reading, personal experience, and systemic inspection, demonstrates his unwillingness to write the way we have always written. As he says of the narrative essay's form, "It must be an essay (or perhaps a collection of essays) that provides connection, giving context to ideas, . . . creating a metaphorical relationship between the idea and the broader context."

In broadening his focus, Penn unfortunately loses much of it. As a theoretical critique, his analysis lacks depth; as a memoir, his ironic tone dodges intimacy and specificity. What remains is a freely concocted gumbo—a sprinkle of theory, a dash of narrative, and a

healthy dose of what unfortunately reads like revenge literature. He frequently targets academic bureaucracy and Christianity in critiques that begin and end on the commonplace grounds that they fall short of their ideals. Penn's hazy rhetorical focus problematizes use of this volume for close literary study, political action in the institution or the arena, or much other practical application. It is not Penn's use of "digressiveness" or the sense of conclusive inconclusion—oral elements he uses to write from that tradition—that limits *Feathering Custer*; it is his sacrifice of the particular for the general that leaves too many questions unanswered and, more importantly, unposed.

JOSHUA B. NELSON  
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*Racial Frontiers: Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans in Western America, 1848-1890*. By Arnoldo De Leon. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 176 pp. Halftones, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Arnoldo De Leon wrote this book to fill a gap in the existing literature on the American West that either "overlooks or is mindless about the contributions of Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans to the frontier experience." In his view, the presence of these nonwhite groups made the region a racial as well as a psychological frontier. In a short text of only 107 pages, he argues, in chapter 1, that these groups came because the frontier offered them opportunities not available in their homelands (though "homeland" is not entirely applicable to American-born blacks). That is, their motive for migrating to the region was similar to that of European Americans. These peoples of color, contrary to prevailing stereotypes, did adapt to the US political and economic systems as they tried to achieve their dreams despite the immense hurdles placed in their paths



by European Americans who dominated all the major institutions of American life (chapters 2 and 3). The author asserts, however, in chapters 4 and 5, that they “balked at becoming ‘cultural Americans’ . . . though conceding change in the social environment.” Such an assertion is too sweeping because while some individuals clung to their cultures of origin, others did not. Such an assessment contradicts the author’s earlier observation that the competitive interaction of the groups produced “changes among all those involved.”

The book has both strengths and weaknesses. Its aim is laudable. The notes and bibliography indicate that the author read widely to produce this work of synthesis. A specialist in Mexican American history, he also plumbed the literature on Chinese American and African American history in order to give the three groups parity in the study. He is sensitive to class and gender differences within each group. Many of the individuals whose stories he tells are women. He notes that the interethnic interactions ranged from the amicable to the hostile—an important corrective to some of his overly sweeping generalizations. The most interesting tidbits are the instances of cooperation among peoples of color that he unearthed. One wishes the book included more of these little known occurrences.

The book’s negative view of Native Americans, who are depicted as fierce “tribes” that “attacked” and “massacred” the migrants to the frontier, is its greatest weakness. One would think that a book about peoples of color would have seen Native Americans, who are also peoples of color, in a different light. After all, it is *their* land that the immigrants—both white and nonwhite—conquered. A more balanced picture would have included Native American perspectives on the “settlement” of the frontier.

SUCHENG CHAN

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*Toward Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, and History.* Edited by Robert Wardhaugh. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001. 234 pp. Notes, bibliographical references. \$22.95 paper.

**Prair'ie** *n.* a large treeless tract of level or undulating grassland esp. in N. America. (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*)

“How does one define a place? How does one define a region?” asks editor Robert Wardhaugh. Postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism have problematized the concept of definition in general and definition of place in particular. In this age of posts-, the dictionary becomes a site of mis-placed signposts bent on leading one astray. No matter the limitations of “definition,” the Prairies can no longer be defined solely in a narrow, physical sense. Rather, we must “move beyond the transparency of geography to recognize the prairies as socially constituted space,” as essayist Alison Calder notes. Because regional identity is shaped by individual and collective consciousness as well as by geography, it evolves dynamically over time. This compilation of thirteen essays, conceived as conference papers, constitutes “an attempt to highlight recent approaches ‘toward defining the Prairies.’”

The jacket’s promise that the contents are “as diverse as the region itself” is belied by both the essays’ disciplinary representation and scope. Because eight are literary, including all in the second half, the reader is left with the sense that this collection is essentially literary criticism. Further, although several authors critique the homogeneity of conventional Prairie representations, only one addresses aboriginal issues at any length, with Royden Loewen’s study of Mennonite diaries the only other extensive examination of a marginal community. A third complaint involves the sometimes tenuous connection between the anthology’s ostensible purpose and individual essays. Although Wardhaugh’s introduction suggests that Alvin Finkel’s analysis of Alberta’s So-

cial Credit government's resistance to federal policies is contextualized by other Prairie provinces, this isn't the case. Similarly, Wardhaugh's claim that Gerald Davidson posits climate as a determinant of Prairie "political and social structures" misrepresents the essay, however interesting Davidson's description of a scientific/historical approach to climate study may be.

These objections aside, the collection contains a number of strong pieces. Gerald Friesen's "Defining the Prairies: or, why the prairies don't exist," with its claim of the emergence of a "new West," is as provocative as its title suggests. R. Rory Henry illuminates a historically neglected field, the "Construction of Masculine Middle-Class Identity on the Canadian Prairies." And the playful exploration of the phrase "just prairie" by poet and novelist Robert Kroetsch, whose voice echoes through several of the essays, offers a fitting, if necessarily provisional, close to the text.

With a few exceptions—Jason Wiens's densely theoretical and Claire Omhòvère's heavily footnoted literary essays—the collection is readily accessible to an interdisciplinary readership. And, while the terrain is sometimes uneven, the anthology as a whole offers a useful consideration of the shifting meanings of "just prairie."

NINA VAN GESSEL  
Naarden, The Netherlands

*The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History.* Edited by Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Maps, notes, contributor, index. vii + 251 pp. \$35.00.

While the South, West, and New England have always possessed distinctive regional identities, the Middle West has been either a substitute for national character or described variously as "dull," "ordinary," or just plain "nice." Yet, as the essayists point out, the Mid-

west is both homogenous and diverse. Beginning with an excellent introduction that summarizes the historiography of the idea of the Middle West as a region, the ten essays in the collection seek both to explore more deeply the idea and construction of the Middle West as a region and to provide case studies in the development of the concept. In the former category are Andrew Cayton's comprehensive "The Anti-Region," in which he investigates various cultural descriptions of the region, and Doug Hurt's wry statistical summary of the "middleness" of the Middle West. In the latter category are John Larson's droll essay, "Pig in Space," which looks for the source of Hoosier identity and finds it in the first years of settlement, and Kathleen Cozens's "Pi-ing the Type," an analysis of a woman editor's role in the creation of regional identity in Minnesota.

The strengths of the book lie in its organization and fresh approach. Clearly, the editors kept a sure hand on the conceptualization of the anthology—not always an easy task. Each author was also free to integrate his or her personal experience into the essays as a touchstone for the topic and interpretation. A reader gleans some idea of the historian behind the history. The coverage of the region is extensive and varied, including attention to gender, race, and ethnicity, although the editors bemoan the absence of a "Chicago" essay. As a result, the collection will attract both the general reader interested in things Midwestern and the instructor in the market for a good classroom text. Finally, the essays are all uniformly interesting, well written, and, from time to time, witty.

Yet not all is "beer and skittles." Despite a map that includes North and South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska, and except for a few brief discussions of Willa Cather and scattered references to other persons or places, the Midwestern Plains states receive little attention from the essayists. Conceivably, a case might be made that these states (or their area) constitute a liminal zone between the Middle and Far Wests and, in consequence, differ from

the general characterization of the Midwest evident in the collection.

PAULA PETRIK

Department of History and Art History  
George Mason University

*Gold Rush: The Black Hills Story.* Compiled by John D. McDermott. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2001. 144 pp. Photographs, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$17.95 paper.

The Black Hills Gold Rush, instigated by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer's 1874 expedition to the Hills confirming that there was gold there "among the roots of the grass," was an event important to both the nation and the future state of South Dakota, not to mention to the Native Americans who had inhabited the area for centuries. Watson Parker's *Gold in the Black Hills* (1966) provided an excellent account of the gold rush, and John D. McDermott, the compiler and one of the authors of this volume, acknowledges his pioneering work on the subject. This collection of essays succeeds in probing more deeply into several aspects of the phenomenon, especially the business and promotion of the gold rush, thus enhancing our understanding of events and engaging our interest as well.

McDermott's essay on the military problem facing the Army in 1874-1875 sets the stage for what is to follow. The Army, while making substantial efforts to uphold the Treaty of Fort Laramie by blocking non-Indian gold seekers from the Hills, simultaneously maneuvered to open them up for economic exploitation and to force the Indians to accept the results. Army leaders thus played a major role in the coming of warfare to the Plains in 1876, McDermott contends.

Harry H. Anderson provides an interesting case study of entrepreneurial zeal in describing efforts of businessmen and politicians in Yankton to promote their town as a frontier

jumping-off point for individuals and groups who wanted to go prospecting in the Hills. James D. McLaird provides background information on Leander P. Richardson's five-day visit to Deadwood in late July and early August, 1876, and carefully analyzes the journal Richardson kept and relied on to write his later accounts of the trip. In the process, McLaird clarifies some disputed matters and lays to rest some allegations surrounding Wild Bill Hickock and other subjects.

Bob Lee goes beyond the business of gold mining to discuss a wide variety of economic activities in the Hills, from transportation and freighting to retail trade, cattle and sheep herding, and agriculture. Finally, Ernest Grafe and Paul Horsted reflect ingenuity and tenacity in describing their most recent effort to rephotograph places in the Black Hills through which the Custer Expedition passed on its thousand-mile-round journey from Fort Abraham Lincoln. Together, these essays do not constitute the whole story, but they provide a well-researched and engagingly written supplement to other treatments of the subject.

JOHN E. MILLER

Department of History  
South Dakota State University

*Jeannette Rankin: America's Conscience.* By Norma Smith. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 2002. 234 pp. Photographs, index. \$17.95 paper.

Norma Smith's posthumously published biography of Jeannette Rankin offers a welcome addition to scholarship devoted to this early feminist, Congresswoman, and peace activist. Rankin's life story intersects with several major developments in Western politics and US public life. Rankin began her political career lobbying for woman's suffrage in Washington, eventually heading up the successful 1914 suffrage campaign in her home state of Montana. Rankin's suffrage work positioned her to run for national office; in 1916 she became one of Montana's two members of the



House of Representatives and the first woman to serve in the United States Congress. Rankin ran on a platform that emphasized woman's rights, maternal and child welfare, progressive farm legislation, and pacifism. It was pacifism and feminism, however, that came to define her work and her life—pacifism because of her increasing devotion to it, and feminism because of her unique position as the first woman in Congress.

In recounting the details of Rankin's life, Smith echoes themes explored in two previous Rankin biographies, Kevin S. Giles's *Flight of the Dove: The Story of Jeannette Rankin* (1980) and Hannah Josephson's *Jeannette Rankin: First Lady in Congress* (1974). After telling the story of Rankin's 1916 election and her vote against World War I, Smith reflects on the remaining months of Rankin's term in Congress, her ill-fated 1918 run for the US Senate, her work as a lobbyist and peace activist, her second term in the House of Representatives in 1941, her lone vote against US entry into World War II, her retirement to the state of Georgia, and her re-birth as a contested heroine to second wave feminists and activists protesting the Vietnam War.

Smith's account, however, is distinctive, reflecting the unique relationship the two women shared. Smith first encountered Rankin in 1961 when Rankin was receiving an honorary doctorate from Montana State College and Smith was "in the audience, waiting for [her] master's degree in history." Fascinated by Rankin's story, Smith fixed upon writing her biography. She introduced herself shortly thereafter and the women forged a deep friendship. In the book's introduction, Kathryn Anderson acknowledges the significance of this friendship, noting that Rankin "seemed particularly open to Smith, offering hospitality to her and her daughter on several long weekends in Georgia and Montana." From this trusting relationship emerges a sympathetic yet balanced account of Rankin's life and work.

SARA HAYDEN

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*Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen.* By Bob Greene. New York: William Morrow, 2002. 264 pp. \$24.95.

Bob Greene interweaves narratives of sojourns in North Platte, local history, and stories of the Canteen culled from interviews (often tearful, one calling him to go on record the day before surgery) with those who served there and those who were served, a distinction that in the end blurs.

The story of the Canteen itself captures folks from a hundred and twenty-five communities in Nebraska and eastern Colorado, "Some . . . you can't even find on a map, sixty years later," meeting up to 8,000 troops a day, carried on up to thirty-two trains a day, each stopping "as long as it took to put water in the steam engines," six million in all, hosted at the North Platte Canteen. It was "not something orchestrated by the government . . . not paid for with public money." More, "All the efforts . . . to feed every soldier who passed through on the trains . . . [were] done against the backdrop of national rationing," yet volunteers "never missed a day, never missed a train." Greene rightly calls it a "miracle."

Searching about North Platte, Greene writes from the point of view of a newer America that leaves us feeling bereft of "a country that many of us seem always to be searching for." He had set out to find "The best America there ever was. Or at least whatever might be left of it." Accomplishing his quest for "what it is that we want the country to become" leads to him thinking that "maybe the answer is one we already had, but somehow threw away."

His current North Platte is the mall, Wal-Mart, "the downtown of our parents' parents," a soft ball game (at which a ticket taker turns out to be the same fellow who appears playing the piano in one of the pictures of the Canteen scene), heat and distance, a Chamber of Commerce party with a nautical theme ("Nowhere in the United States farther removed . . . from either ocean . . ."), and a bikini contest at a local bar for which, despite the

offer of \$1,500, "No one came forward. There were no entrants."

In an air age that passes over North Platte, Greene had arrived on I-80, Ike's highway, to search out the story of those who had arrived by train, passing across the old Pony Express route, on their way to the Pacific or to Europe, where Ike was waiting for them. When he first arrived, the news was full of local brutalities that made "Nebraska . . . sound deflatingly like the rest of the continental United States." It sounded much like the old North Platte: "Very rough and wide open," with its brothels, "bodies . . . in the cornfields," a town in which, "The people who ran the town appreciated their freedom—the freedom to be corrupt." The Canteen, then, was a moment in the life of this small area of the Great Plains that distinguished it from its neighbors and the country at large.

The heart of Greene's story is the sacrifice of operating the Canteen and the impact it made.

Many there had little themselves; one describes volunteering there when "we had no Christmas tree—we really had nothing . . . I slept on a couch in the living room of [a] rooming house." Some had sons in the military; working there "was like a healing thing for them." Another received word there that her son had been killed in the war. Greene describes typical contributions, such as "Morefield . . . 25 birthday cakes, 39 1/2 dozen cupcakes, 149 dozen cookies, 87 fried chickens, 70 dozen eggs," etc. Families used honey for sweetener so the sugar could go for the Canteen. They supplemented their supply with turkey eggs.

Because the women of Tryon would "put the name and address of a girl who attended Tryon high school" into each popcorn ball made for the soldiers, soldiers often ended up with someone to write to. Some correspondents eventually married. A soldier would say to a girl collecting service patches, "You don't have the best patch," and soon one would arrive in the mail.

The Canteen became known the world over. In the Pacific or in Europe, troops would ask one another, "Have you ever been in North

Platte?" or would overhear someone saying, "I wish we had some of those sandwiches like they gave us in North Platte" (quite often pheasant sandwiches). Years later, a ham radio operator would report that at the mention of North Platte there would come a reply, "I once stepped in the Canteen." And the world became known through the Canteen: for a Shelton girl in the discovery that "There's a big world out there. It's not just Main Street"; for a soldier, that "the country was hell of a lot bigger than Manhattan island."

Who can say who gained the most: those who served or those who were served?

When Greene arrived only to find the Canteen, the railway depot, and passenger service all gone, he realized "This was going to be like looking for a ghost." Many interviews later, he found his ghost; it takes shape in *Once Upon a Town*. We believe him: "There was love there," love and "pure, simple generosity." We can imagine with him a "West-central Nebraska . . . spiritually often just a blink away from the place the pioneers first crossed."

Still, with ghosts, the moment is fleeting. It passes like the moment of Jack Manion, standing on the platform between cars, able only "to reach my hand out and shake [the] hand" of his father, standing beside the Kearney track with tears in his eyes. As Greene was taking his last look at the photos of the Canteen, he heard a jukebox playing "All we are is dust in the wind."

CHARLES A. PEEK

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*The Professor's House*. By Willa Cather. Historical essay by James Woodress. Explanatory notes by James Woodress and Kari A. Ronning. Textual editing by Frederick M. Link. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xii + 574 pp. \$75.00.

Although less familiar to most readers than *O Pioneers!*, *My Antonia*, or *Death Comes for*

the *Archbishop*, *The Professor's House* (1925) is arguably Willa Cather's most important novel of the 1920s. Thematically, the book is exceptionally far ranging. As Cather's closest approach to a novel of the Jazz Age, *The Professor's House* offers a portrait of conspicuous consumption occasionally reminiscent of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. As a portrait of post-World-War-I disillusionment, the novel bears comparison with Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. And then there is the narrative's timely concern with the health of American higher education, especially the Liberal Arts tradition, amid a culture preoccupied (then as now) with quantifiable results. Whether approached as a portrait of the Roaring Twenties, an analysis of "the great catastrophe" represented by World War I, or as a campus novel whose insights into university life and politics still hold true today, *The Professor's House* stands among its author's most complex and rewarding creations.

At 575 pages, the Willa Cather Scholarly Edition of *The Professor's House* does full justice to Cather's richly allusive—and elusive—art. Nearly 50 pages of explanatory notes provide information on every conceivable facet of the text, from the flora and fauna of Wisconsin and New Mexico to the refinement of early twentieth-century aircraft engines. An historical essay, supplemented by Cather's 1916 *Denver Times* article on Mesa Verde (reprinted in full), outlines the novel's sources and reception. A section of illustrations provides a visual context. And, best of all, a textual essay (followed by a list of emendations and rejected substantives) sheds new light on Cather's creative practices.

Readers new to *The Professor's House* will probably skip the nearly 200 pages of material this volume devotes to matters of textual history. In doing so, they will miss out on a scholarly tour de force. In his brilliant textual essay, Frederick M. Link compares several versions of the novel (including a typescript of *The Professor's House* recently donated to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as part of the Philip L. and Helen Cather Southwick Col-

lection), delineates the decisions that determined the text offered in this new edition, and, in the process, gives us a fresh picture of Willa Cather at work. Through Link's discussion of textual variations, we learn of Cather's relatively apathetic attitude toward the serialized version of *The Professor's House* (run in *Collier's* magazine) and, in contrast, her almost tyrannical control of the first edition published by Knopf, a control that extended beyond matters of punctuation and phraseology to the actual design of the book—its margins, type style, color and weight of paper, and so forth. Moreover, Link's analysis of the Southwick typescript reinforces this image of Cather as the ultimate literary perfectionist: in one emendation after another we see Cather honing her prose, achieving ever greater precision and coherence.

An achievement worthy of the masterpiece at its center, the Willa Cather Scholarly Edition of *The Professor's House* is a major addition to Cather studies.

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Department of English  
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*Willa Cather Remembered*. Edited by Sharon Hoover. Compiled by L. Brent Bohlke and Sharon Hoover. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xvi + 218 pp. Illustrations, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

This welcome addition to Willa Cather scholarship is composed of forty-five reminiscences of the author by friends and professional associates documenting key stages of her personal life and literary career. While there is little here that has not been published before, Cather specialists will nonetheless want to add *Willa Cather Remembered* to their libraries. What makes the volume so appealing is that it collects important biographical material previously available only in miscellaneous sources. The legal restriction on publishing or even quoting excerpts from Cather's letters makes schol-



arship such as this all the more important. General readers with an interest in the Great Plains will want the book, too, for over a dozen of the reminiscences focus on Cather's Nebraska years.

Most of the selections were compiled by Cather scholars Bernice Slote and L. Brent Bohlke. The latter envisioned the collection as a successor to his indispensable *Willa Cather In Person: Interviews, Speeches, and Letters* (1986), but was unable to complete the work before his death in 1987. Fortunately for Cather enthusiasts, Sharon Hoover picked up the project where Bohlke left off. Her sure editorial hand is evident in the volume's insightful introduction, sensible organization, and pertinent contextual information. She rightly estimates that the current volume "reflects more on Cather as a person than as a writer, although the two are often inextricably mixed." The recollections are grouped under three headings: "A Lively Apprenticeship," "A Literary Life" (various literary people), and "Friendships." These are prefaced by a concise commentary on the material and biographical notes on the writers, most of whom are now little known.

What emerges most clearly from these pieces is that Cather elicited strong reactions from those who encountered her. As Hoover notes, a few of the reminiscences express "deep resentment" toward Cather for her professional ambitions and personal choices; most, however, "reflect respect" for the author. A former high school student of Cather's in Pittsburgh recalls that her teacher was beloved by many, but "had little patience with the stupid or careless pupil." The same might be said of the stupid or careless adult. Book reviewer Fanny Butcher judged that Cather had "none of the cynic's contempt for mankind, but more the philosopher's wide observation of man and his motives." Violinist Yehudi Menuhin wrote of "Aunt Willa": "One could tell her everything in one's heart; it would never be misused, never turned against one, never cause her to alter her regard."

In sum, *Willa Cather Remembered* makes a valuable contribution to Cather studies, Great

Plains studies, and, more broadly, American literary scholarship.

MARK MADIGAN  
Department of English  
Nazareth College

*Sacagawea's Nickname: Essays on the American West.* By Larry McMurtry. New York: New York Review of Books, 2001. xiv + 178 pp. \$19.95.

In these essays, originally published in the *New York Review of Books*, Larry McMurtry examines Western writers as mythmakers. Overall, however, his most interesting pieces are those in which he pays tribute to authors who have influenced his own work or have left behind literary treasures he finds moving and wise.

One of the essays is devoted to historian Angie Debo and her influence on McMurtry's development as a writer. As a youth he accidentally found *The Road to Disappearance* (1941), her history of the Creek Indians, and discovered that Debo, from neighboring Oklahoma, had made for herself a life devoted to writing. Her example taught McMurtry that, despite the limited opportunities in the Great Plains region, one could organize one's life around writing. Moreover, the straightforward, unsentimental manner in which she narrated her tragic histories of the dispossession of the Indians of the Five Tribes left an enduring impression on him. This essay is his way of repaying her for those gifts.

In another essay, McMurtry celebrates an "American epic," *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, edited by Gary E. Moulton and assistant editor Thomas Dunlay. These volumes, published by the University of Nebraska Press, now permit Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to do what the best writers have always done—immerse readers in their adventures along the trail. McMurtry provides guideposts for those willing to take that journey across America.

In "Sacagawea's Nickname," the volume's title essay, McMurtry explores the fragmentary evidence of the relationship between William Clark and Sacagawea, whom Clark nicknamed "Janey." The two, McMurtry believes, developed a strong bond. We know little about Sacagawea, but what we do know, McMurtry notes, is largely because of Clark's references to her and his struggle to record her name phonetically so that she would survive in history.

This volume will appeal to a wide range of Western enthusiasts and those interested in good literature, whatever the region. McMurtry's insights are always penetrating, but his tribute to the poet-novelist Janet Lewis deserves careful reading. He studies her as an author over time and lays bare the unflinching honesty and subtlety she brought to both her poetry and her fiction and the tragic themes she explored. *Sacagawea's Nickname* is provocative in some parts, humorous in others, but always rewarding concerning those writers who have helped to shape our views of a region central to America's definition of itself.

SHIRLEY A. LECKIE  
Department of History  
University of Central Florida

*Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps.* By Ted Kooser. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. 168 pp. \$22.00 cloth, \$10.95 paper.

It's no wonder that the title of Ted Kooser's first book of nonfiction prose should share the word "local" with his first volume of poems, *A Local Habitation and a Name* (1974), for place is always central in Kooser's writing. The locale of *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps* is Kooser's land north of the village of Garland, Nebraska, where he lives with his wife, two dogs, and an indeterminate number of chickens.

Kooser claims this land as his place in several ways. First, he does a lot of looking: at old

buildings, wild roses, animals, people. And he listens. For example, the book is sprinkled with aphorisms from the Bohemians who settled in this area. But mostly he listens *through* watching. The land and its structures tell him their stories. An old lilac bush near an abandoned farmhouse, for instance, "set[s] about to chronicle the history of this farmstead. In its withered arms, it has gathered the memorabilia of many years." The "items the bush has decided to keep" include "three spark plugs, a broken water glass . . . two broken robin eggs . . . bits of cellophane . . . pieces of wallpaper printed with pine cones." What most would find an unsightly collection of garbage intrigues Kooser who "sit[s] in the shade of the lilac, sorting through the curios of this lilac museum."

For Kooser, there is no such thing as an inanimate object. Old hand tools glisten with the dreams of those who have yielded them. A caravan of elephants marching across the top of a bookcase bears memories of Uncle Tubby. And old cookie tins hold the "good ghosts of cookies." "I hold on to nearly everything that comes my way," Kooser admits. He means the objects themselves, and he also refers to the memories such objects contain and project. His mother's cutting board holds "chapters on flaky pie dough, thick egg noodles, and round steak hammered to a pulp" even after it has broken in two. Saving and repairing such objects reveals that "there is so much I want to hold together." So much is held together here—self and family, individual and community, now and yesterday—and all through words. Kooser further deepens our wonder at the power and mystery of words by frequently reminding us of their histories. Explaining his preference for staying put, for instance, he reminds us that "travel" and "travail" share the same root. Reading this book one marvels at the ability of a mere word—that "ayerly nothing"—to hold together the entire world.

The prose within the seasonal sections of *Local Wonders* is divided into pieces of half a page to a couple of pages. These combine the metaphorical richness of poems with the easy

intimacy of a postcard. Kooser's stay-at-home postcards do what all really good travel literature does: they remind us to look around, to see what's right in front of us, and to treasure our memories.

Through his love of the word, his reverence for place, his tender observations, and his wry wit, Kooser reanimates our world, convincing us that there is no true separation between the material and the spiritual, that, in fact, it may be our connection to the things of this world that holds us—like the glue bonding the broken halves of his mother's cutting board—to the divine.

JUDITH SORNBERGER

Department of Languages and Literature  
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania

*The Nature of Home*. By Lisa Knopp. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xiv + 231 pp. References. \$24.95.

In this collection of personal essays, Lisa Knopp creates a constellation of various non-fiction forms, including memoir, social and natural history, biography, and travel writing, around the central subject of "home"—"what home is, how one might find it, what it means to be at home or away from home or homeless . . . ." Brief lexicon entries, consisting of an OED definition of a particular word along with the writer's musings on the word's relation to her central subject, serve as interludes between each of the book's twenty-two essays. The combination of lexicon entries and essays creates a rich and resonant dialectic: an entry on the word "Citizen" is paired with an essay concerning the politics of salt marsh reclamation; "Heaven" serves as a prelude to "My Place of Many Times," an essay about the writer's childhood home.

*The Nature of Home* displays Knopp's native gifts as an essayist, including her ability to take the most quotidian of moments—shucking soybeans on the back porch, braiding hair—and glean from them important insights about the ways we live. The most compelling part of the book, though, is the narrative account of the writer's decision to leave a stable university teaching position and return with her two young children to southeastern Nebraska, the region she calls her "belonging-place." In a culture that considers it commendable to leave home in order to stake a claim in the outside world, Knopp's decision to defer her academic career in order to return to more familiar terrain comes across as a counter-cultural, even quietly subversive, resolution.

The natural and social history of Nebraska and the Plains region figure prominently in the book. Knopp weaves research into her essays clearly and compellingly, rarely overwhelming her deeper points with facts. (She nicely models Phillip Lopate's advice, offered in his introduction to *The Art of the Personal Essay*, that an essayist "graciously inform without humiliating or playing the pedantic schoolmaster.") While her depiction of the region is generally fond, she isn't afraid to look soberly at less praiseworthy aspects as well: The essay "Witness" provides an unflinching account of the evening an African American man is executed at the Nebraska State Penitentiary while a celebratory mob in the parking lot guzzles beer and waves racist signs. Knopp's deep sense of connection to the region makes this cruel demonstration all the more painful and difficult for her to resolve, and provides a realization that deepens and complicates the writer's understanding of her belonging-place.

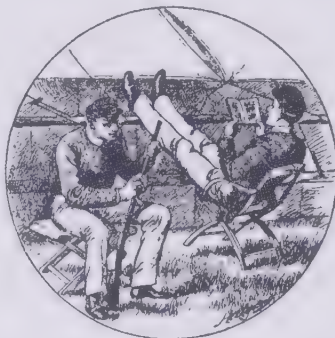
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## BOOK NOTES

*The Definitive Journals of Lewis and Clark: Seven Volume Set.* Edited by Gary E. Moulton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. Illustrations, maps, indices. lxxiv + 3,404 pp. \$152.95 paper.

This paper edition of the seven core volumes of the journals, those written specifically by Lewis and Clark, embody new scholarship dealing with all aspects of the expedition including geography, flora and fauna, and Native languages.

\* \* \*

*A Calendar of the Letters of Willa Cather.* Edited by Janis P. Stout. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. Index. xxii + 334 pp. \$65.00.

Janis Stout catalogues and gives a brief summary of more than 1,800 of Willa Cather's letters, accompanied by a biographical directory identifying correspondents. The volume includes an index of the widely scattered letters organized by location, correspondent, and names and titles mentioned within.

\* \* \*

*Chinese on the American Frontier.* Edited by Arif Dirlik. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001. Photographs, figures, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. xxxviii + 506 pp. \$85.00.

Dirlik presents a comprehensive study of the often-overlooked subject of the Chinese presence on the Great Plains in the nineteenth century. Through memoirs and historical documents, readers are offered a better understanding of Chinese on the frontier.

*The Diaries of John Gregory Bourke: Volume One, November 20, 1872–July 28, 1876.* Edited and Annotated by Charles M. Robinson III. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2003. Photographs, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. x + 518 pp. \$49.95.

This is the first in an eventual set of six volumes containing the diaries of John Gregory Bourke. As a cavalry lieutenant, Bourke kept extensive notes on his time in service—particularly the years as aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Crook—that reveal much about life in the military on the frontier.

\* \* \*

*Westward Expansion.* By Sara E. Quay. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002. Illustrations, notes, suggested readings, index. xx + 302 pp. \$49.95.

Along with examining the items of everyday use that found their way West as the country expanded, the volume looks at the myths and folktales that emerged and prevailed as icons of the West, including the significance of these images today.

\* \* \*

*Bravo of the Brazos: John Larn of Fort Griffin, Texas.* By Robert K. DeArment. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. xviii + 222 pp. \$29.95.

A biography of the famed rancher and vigilante, John Larn, of the Clear Fork area of Texas. DeArment attempts to piece together the life of this controversial figure, who even today sparks strong reactions among residents of the area.

*The Human Tradition in Texas.* Edited by Ty Cashion and Jesús F. de la Teja. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001. Notes, suggested readings. xxiv + 240 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

This history of Texas is portrayed through fifteen individuals who influenced the culture and growth of the state. Biographical sketches range from the sixteenth-century explorer Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca to the twentieth-century's Hermine Tobolowsky, who fought for women's rights.

\* \* \*

*Museums and Historic Sites of the American West.* By Victor J. Danilov. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002. Photographs, selected bibliography, index. xii + 828 pp. \$119.95.

Danilov offers a comprehensive guide to the historic sites and museums relating to the early American West. His book is divided into sections on specific museum types as well as by state.

\* \* \*

*Guide to the Photographs in the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma.* Compiled by Kristina L. Southwell. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. Photographs, illustrations. xxvi + 190 pp. \$19.95 paper.

A detailed guide to more than 650 photograph collections found at the University of Oklahoma that include images of frontier life, Native American culture, Wild West shows, range cattle industry, and much more.

\* \* \*

*Guide to the Manuscripts in the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma.* Compiled by Kristina L. Southwell. Norman: Uni-

versity of Oklahoma Press, 2002. Photographs, illustrations. xxiv + 436 pp. \$24.95 paper.

A detailed guide to more than 1,500 manuscript collections found at the University of Oklahoma that include papers on pioneers, artists, anthropologists, missionary activities, the Five Tribes, and more.

\* \* \*

*A Thousand Miles of Prairie: The Manitoba Historical Society and the History of Western Canada.* Edited by Jim Blanchard. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002. Illustrations, appendix. x + 260 pp. \$19.95 paper.

These thirteen lectures were given during the early years of the Manitoba Historical Society. One of Canada's first historical societies, the MHS provided an outlet for discussion on various aspects of the natural and human history of nineteenth-century western Canada.

\* \* \*

*Edmonton: Stories from the River City.* By Tony Cashman. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002. viii + 174 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Cashman collects colorful stories of people who helped build and influence the city of Edmonton, Alberta.

\* \* \*

*Building for the Future: A Photo Journal of Saskatchewan's Legislative Building.* By Gordon L. Barnhart. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2002. Photographs, references, selected bibliography. x + 122 pp. \$29.95 paper.

This photo journal chronicles the construction of the legislative building as well as noting its role and significance in the city and province.



*Montezuma: The Castle in the West.* Edited by Jon Bowman. Las Vegas, NM: New Mexico Magazine, 2002. Photographs, suggested readings, index. 128 pp. \$24.95 paper.

A collection of essays and photographs chronicling the history of Montezuma Castle near Las Vegas, New Mexico, as well as the story of its preservation and restoration.

*Driving Across Kansas: A Guide to I-70.* By Ted T. Cable and Wayne A. Maley. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. Maps, illustrations, references, index. xvi + 244 pp. \$12.95 paper.

Cable and Maley give a guided tour of historic landmarks and stories along Interstate 70 in Kansas. Mile by mile, the reader is taken through the state and informed about landscape, history, folktales, and more.

## ***Great Plains Quarterly*** announces Call for Papers

### **Native American Perspectives of the Lewis & Clark Expedition**

Submissions may include descriptions and analyses of encounters between Lewis & Clark and tribal people on the Plains, how these encounters affected Native People, Native perspectives on the Lewis & Clark commemoration activities, and other topics that address the convergence of Native people and the expedition.

Please send submissions by 15 October 2003

Charles A. Braithwaite, editor  
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# NOTES AND NEWS

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies in the Department of History at Southern Methodist University in Dallas welcomes applications for three residential research fellowships, known as The Bill and Rita Clements Research Fellowships for the Study of Southwestern America. Individuals in any field in the humanities or social sciences doing research on Southwestern America are invited to apply. The fellowships are designed to provide time for senior or junior scholars to bring book-length manuscripts to completion. Fellows will be expected to spend the 2004-2005 academic year at SMU and to participate in Clements Center activities. Fellowships carry a stipend of \$37,000, health benefits, a \$2,000 allowance for research and travel expenses, and a publication subvention. Fellows have the option of teaching one course during the two-semester duration of the fellowship for an additional stipend. Applicants should send a copy of their curriculum vita, a description of their research project, and a sample chapter or extract (if the sample is from a dissertation, please include the introduction), and arrange to have letters of reference sent from three persons who can assess the significance of the work and the ability of the scholar to carry it out. Send applications to: David Weber, Director, Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University Dallas, TX 75275-0176. Applications must be received by 12 January 2004. If you have questions, please call (214) 768-1233 or send an e-mail to <swcenter@smu.edu>.

## CALL FOR PAPERS: SOUTHERN HUMANITIES COUNCIL

The Southern Humanities Council Conference 2004 meeting will focus on the theme, "Rhetoric in Culture: Relations, Rights, and

Responsibilities," and will be held 5-8 February 2004, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Southern Humanities Council seeks to bring together scholars of all areas and disciplines, as well as activists, community leaders and artists. This year's keynote speaker is Diane Glancy, who will be speaking about her new book, *Stone Heart: A Novel of Sacajawea*.

The Council seeks papers, panels, and other creative forms of session proposals by 1 December 2003 on any and all topics related to this theme. Proposals should be limited to two double-spaced typed pages and sent to Mark Ledbetter, 228 Pine Grove Church Road, Culloden, GA 31016. You may send proposals to <ledbetm@mindspring.com>. For further information contact our web site <www.southernhumanitiescouncil.org>, write to the e-mail address, or call (478) 992-9110.

## GREAT PLAINS SYMPOSIUM

The Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is pleased to announce the theme of the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Interdisciplinary Symposium, to be held 3-4 June 2004. The conference will be on "The Nature of Lewis & Clark on the Great Plains." The symposium will focus on the areas in which the expedition concentrated their scientific studies and naturalist observations. Dr. John Logan Allen and Dr. James L. Reveal will serve as keynote speakers. In addition, twelve scholars in six areas—botany, climatology, geology, ornithology, rivers systems, and zoology—will look at the expedition's encounter with the Great Plains environment, the present situation of the region, and the changes over the last two centuries. The symposium will be held at the Arbor Day Farm, Lied Conference Center, in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Registration will begin in January 2004. For more information, call (402) 472-3964, or visit the web site at <<http://www.unl.edu/plains/events/2004/overview.htm>>.

# Great Wildlife of the Great Plains

Paul A. Johnsgard

Illustrated by the author

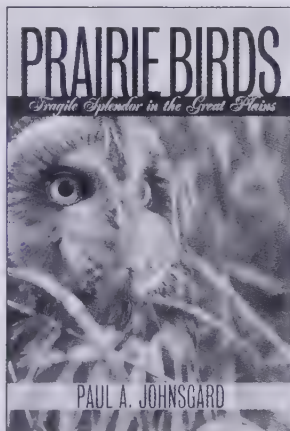
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—Craig C. Freeman, coauthor of *Roadside Wildflowers of the Southern Great Plains*

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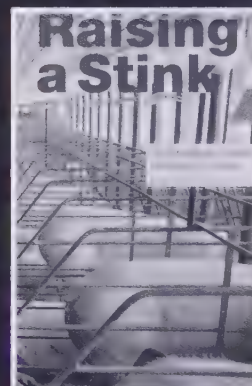
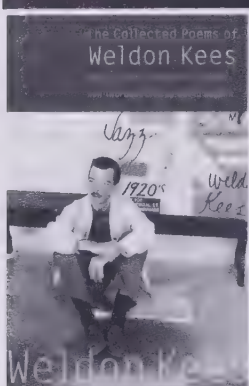
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The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in *Great Plains Quarterly* during a volume year. All articles submitted to the *Quarterly* are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from the editorial board of the *Quarterly*. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies' annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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# RELIGION, IDEALISM, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE NORTHERN PLAINS

## ERA BELL THOMPSON'S *AMERICAN DAUGHTER*

KEVIN L. COLE AND LEAH WEINS

In her introduction to *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory*, Margo Culley writes, "It would be hard to point to a field of contemporary literary studies more vibrant than autobiography studies. Where else does one find a wealth of primary material still mostly unread and unranked?"<sup>1</sup> "Unread and

KEY WORDS: Thompson, Era Bell; African-American autobiography; Great Plains autobiography

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unranked" aptly describes Era Bell Thompson's *American Daughter*, an autobiographical account of an African American woman who comes of age on the plains of North Dakota in the early twentieth century. It is one of those almost forgotten autobiographies that deserves to be read, ranked, and reconsidered, especially in the milieu of Great Plains studies.

*American Daughter* has never received much attention from the general public and scholars. First published in 1946 by the University of Chicago Press, *American Daughter* initially attracted the attention of writers as prominent as Ralph Ellison, whose review, while not laudatory, was nonetheless admiring.<sup>2</sup> Despite other favorable reviews and the prestige of the University of Chicago Press, *American Daughter* fell into obscurity. It has been republished only twice since 1946—in 1967 and 1986—and has been the subject of only one extended scholarly discussion.<sup>3</sup> The vagaries of *American Daughter*'s publication history should not seal its fate as an insignificant vestige fit only for the archives, however. It deserves to be read, ranked, and included in Great Plains studies if only because it recounts one of the rarest of American experiences:

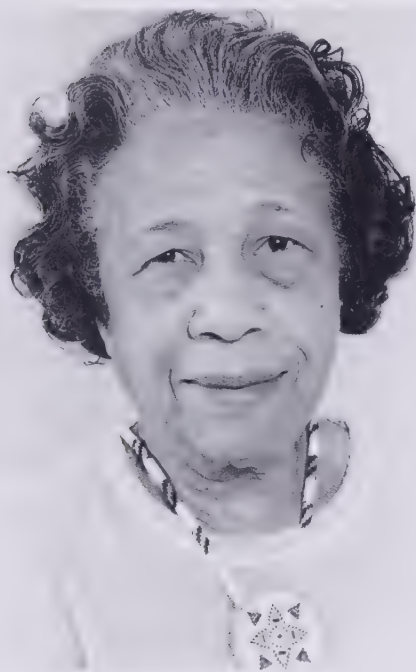


FIG. 1. Era Bell Thompson. Courtesy of University of North Dakota Office of University Relations.

growing up African American on a homestead in the Northern Great Plains in the first two decades of the twentieth century. After all, what besides Oscar Micheaux's *Conquest* comes to mind when one thinks of African American autobiographies of the Northern Great Plains?

In this article we pursue several objectives. We assume that most readers will not have read *American Daughter*, so we first provide a brief summary of it. Second, we discuss the place of *American Daughter* among other African American autobiographies of its time. We then discuss—and offer up a reading of—*American Daughter* by examining Thompson's treatment of religion, an integral element of the work. Specifically, we discuss Thompson's rhetorical strategies as they relate to religion and religious discourse. In the end, we intend to call attention to and renew interest in an overlooked text that, in our opinion, would be of interest and use to scholars and students of the Great Plains.

## SUMMARY AND ORIGINS OF AMERICAN DAUGHTER

When she wrote *American Daughter*, Thompson was unknown outside of North Dakota, and so it is useful to ask why she would write an autobiography in the first place. Answering this question will provide a brief but useful summary of the book.

In the Great Migration, millions of African Americans migrated from the rural South into the urban centers of the North and Midwest in the early twentieth century. As an adult, Thompson herself would join the Great Migration to Chicago, but what makes her migration there unique is that she migrated from the rural Upper Midwest, not from the South.

Originally from Virginia, Thompson's family was one of a very few African American families who migrated to the Upper Midwest: in their case, to North Dakota in 1914. A passage from *American Daughter*, in which Thompson describes a Christmas gathering, illustrates just how unique they were as African Americans in the Northern Great Plains:

Now there were fifteen us, four percent of the state's entire Negro population. Out there in the middle of nowhere, laughing and talking and thanking God for this new world of freedom and opportunity, there was a feeling of brotherhood, of race consciousness, and of family solidarity. For the last time in my life, I was part of a whole family, and my family was a large part of a little colored world, and for a while no one else existed.<sup>4</sup>

Thompson does not resort to hyperbole. In 1920, just six years after they moved to North Dakota, the general population of the state was 646,872; the black population was 467.<sup>5</sup>

*American Daughter* opens with the birth of Era Bell in Des Moines in 1906 and her short-lived idyllic childhood there. By the second chapter, her father, Tony, has decided to forsake a comfortable, middle-class existence in Des Moines and follow his half-brother, Gar-



risson (John), who lives on a homestead in North Dakota.<sup>6</sup> Era Bell is then nine years old. Thompson devotes the majority of *American Daughter* to recounting her childhood and adolescence on the homestead and her young adulthood in Bismarck and Mandan. In the last two chapters, she writes about her college years and her subsequent life in Chicago, where she took various clerical jobs while trying to establish herself as a writer.

Although Thompson understood the uniqueness of her family's experience, she apparently had not considered writing about it until 1945. After graduating from college in 1933, she moved to Chicago. As Kathie Anderson explains, it was not until Thompson applied for a Newberry Fellowship in 1945—to write a book about North Dakota—that she decided to write an autobiography. Recognizing the uniqueness of her experience, the Newberry committee suggested she instead write an autobiography.<sup>7</sup> The University of Chicago Press published *American Daughter* in 1946.

#### CONTEXT OF AMERICAN DAUGHTER IN AMERICAN WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Discussing the place of *American Daughter* among other autobiographies of its time, especially African American autobiographies, would require a separate article. It is worth briefly noting, though, the place of *American Daughter* among African American autobiographies that precede and follow it.

Joanne Braxton contends that *American Daughter* represents the first bold departure from Richard Wright's *Black Boy* in that *American Daughter* is not a work of protest. The most celebrated African American autobiography of the 1940s was—and perhaps still is—*Black Boy*, published in 1945. It established a standard from which few departed over the next few years: using autobiography as a means of protest and as a means to criticize a society that undermined the ambitions and aspirations of African Americans, especially African American men. One thinks, for example, of

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. *American Daughter* instead presents “resilient and self-sufficient individuals rather than victims of culture” and “contains the possibility of personal fulfillment.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, *American Daughter* is not fraught with racial tension, and rarely does Thompson engage in political discourse regarding racial matters. When she does, she almost always does so in a humorous, gently satirical manner. Culley points to this unique aspect of *American Daughter*: “For most black women, as for most black men,” she writes, “the foundational category is race,” so much so that “the sign of race seems to override the sign of gender in the titles of black women's autobiographies.” Culley points to *American Daughter* as an exception.<sup>9</sup>

*American Daughter* also represents a departure from the standard form of autobiographies written by African American women. On the one hand, Braxton explains that the 1940s was a pivotal decade for African American women's autobiography: “Responding to a sense of geographic and cultural displacement,” she writes, “black women gained access to the literary tools of Western culture generally reserved for whites and men and found the writing of autobiography to be refuge of identity.” She lists some of the more noteworthy: Jane Hunter's *A Nickel and a Prayer* (1940), Mary Church Terrell's *A Colored Woman in a White World* (1940), Laura Adams's *Dark Symphony* (1942), Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks* (1942), and Syble Everett's *Adventures with Life: An Autobiography of a Distinguished Negro Citizen* (1945).<sup>10</sup>

Even so, Braxton points to Zora Neale Hurston (*Dust Tracks*) and Era Bell Thompson as being the first autobiographers to depart from the conventions that defined the African American autobiographies that preceded them:

These women [Thompson and Hurston] represent the first generation of black women autobiographers that did not continually come into contact with former slaves. Their texts reveal a growing sense of

displacement that is geographic, cultural, and social; it is accompanied by a reevaluation and rejection of the traditional female role.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Braxton illustrates that both autobiographies "forecast the major literary events that will occur in this tradition for the next two decades." For instance, as a narrative of "isolation and transcendence," *American Daughter* reminds one of Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) but also presages works such as Ruby Lee Goodwin's *It's Good to Be Black* (1953) and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970).<sup>12</sup>

Finally, *American Daughter* is unique among autobiographies of the "frontier," or what Lynn Z. Bloom calls "twentieth-century Western frontier autobiographies."<sup>13</sup> Focusing on autobiographies by women, Bloom categorizes these frontier autobiographies as tragicomic, anti-patriarchal, and anti-utopia. She writes: "Twentieth-century women autobiographers of the Western frontier invent themselves as new women in a new land, their utopian visions fulfilled, denied, or met partway."<sup>14</sup> Bloom's categorization is useful in identifying the uniqueness of *American Daughter*, because even though Bloom does not discuss Thompson, it is clear that *American Daughter* falls into none of these categories. If *American Daughter* were to take any label, it would be "coming-of-age autobiography."

#### RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE AND RHETORICAL STRATEGY

The language of *American Daughter*, rich in religious imagery and allusion, invites readers to read it as a *spiritual* coming-of-age autobiography. The second word of *American Daughter* is "Lord," part of her father's exclamation, "My Lord, it's a girl!" referring to the birth of Era Bell. It would be hyperbole to say that Thompson uses this exclamation to forecast the religious tenor of the work, but in some ways it does, intentionally or not,

given the ubiquitous presence of religion in *American Daughter* and the degree to which religion informs Thompson's rhetorical strategy.

Consider, for instance, Thompson's description of nature and the geography of the Northern Plains. One does not find purple prose but rather an original voice that articulates a religious aesthetic informed by biblical metaphors and allusions. Thompson often refers to God in her description of landscape and geography, commenting specifically on the presence of God below, on, and above the earth. This dimension of her aesthetic emerges in chapter 2, "God's Country." As the following passage indicates, Thompson does not gratuitously or lazily rely on the metaphor:

It was a strange and beautiful country my father had come to, so big and boundless he could look for miles and miles out over the golden prairies and follow the unbroken horizon where the midday blue met the bare peaks of the distant hills. No tree or bush to break the view, miles and miles of grass, acre after acre of waving grain, and up above, God and that fiery chariot which beat remorselessly down upon a parching earth. (23)

Although Thompson presumably would not have subscribed to Emerson's religious—or irreligious—views, she does write in the Emersonian (and Puritan) tradition that associates God with Nature or God as Nature. Readers see this early on in chapter 2 and especially in chapter 3, which is largely about seasonal change in the Northern Plains:

There were still days, silent, hot, motionless days when not a blade of grass stirred, not a stalk of grain moved. You didn't talk much then; you hated to break the prairie silence, the magic of its stillness, for you had that understanding with Nature, that treaty with God. There was no need for words. The silence wore hard on those who did not belong. (50)

In the same vein, Thompson idealizes the labor associated with nature in the Northern Plains by using biblical references and allusions. About shocking grain she writes, "There was something clean and sweet about the harvest, something Biblical about the reaper and the golden sheaves of grain" (58-59). And describing her father's happiness during haying, Thompson writes:

It was a creative thing, this building a stack, rising higher and higher into the sky, above earthly things. He was master of all he surveyed up there, . . . closer to the Golden Stairs. He took Mother with him sometimes, and together they would stand in silence and look away over the prairies. Away over Jordan. (51)

As early as the third chapter, it becomes clear to the reader that for Thompson there is as much religion in the landscape, geography, and the intensive labor required in the Great Plains as there is in the orthodox, conventional environment of a church building:

As fall drew near, the intense heat subsided. There were quiet, silent days when the grainfields were hills of whispering gold, undulating ever so softly in the bated breeze. So warm, so tranquil was the spell that one stretched out on the brown, dry earth, whose dead, tufted prairie grasses made the lying hard, but put even the breeze above you. The sun alone stood between you and the blue sky of your God. (58)

In the presence of such immense geographical solitude and in the absence of a black religious community—a problem we discuss later—one understands how Thompson might have developed this rhetorical strategy.

The discussion thus far might suggest that *American Daughter* is utopian, free of travail, struggle, and deprivation. As we explain later, such is not the case. Thompson recounts everything that was laborious, dreadful, and tragic about living on an isolated homestead

in the Northern Great Plains in the early twentieth century. But she is an optimist and an idealist, who wants to leave readers with the impression that, despite its hardships, the Northern Plains is an idyllic region. As mentioned above, she does so with evocative descriptions of the landscape, replete with religious imagery. But she also portrays the region as idyllic with religious humor, an essential component of her rhetorical strategy. Without it, in fact, *American Daughter* would be a different book.

In chapter 1, when the family is still in Des Moines, Thompson's oldest brother, Hobart (Dick), has a falling out with his father and moves to St. Louis. Hobart fails to make it on his own and returns home shortly. Alluding to the parable of the prodigal son, Thompson establishes this humorous facet of her rhetorical technique:

We didn't kill the fatted calf when Dick returned, but some mighty healthy chickens met an untimely death. . . . Father asked his Sunday blessing, the embodiment of the regular Baptist grace, with deviations and original supplications to fit the occasion. He told the Lord many of the things he couldn't bring himself to tell Dick, and I hope the Lord understood, because Dick wasn't listening. It was his first square meal in two weeks. (18-19)

Before they secure their own homestead, the Thompson family stays with Tony's brother and his family. For a host of reasons, Tony had never liked Garrison's wife, Ada (Anna), namely because she was, as Thompson puts it, "fat and white. Bossy white" (24). Predictably, Tony and Ada have a heated argument, making life in the crowded house unbearable. The argument tries the Christian fortitude of the former deacon and trustee of the Colored Baptist Church in Des Moines. Thompson, who then shared her parents' bedroom, comically recounts Tony's frustration as he talks to his wife: "'Old Brother Satan hisself couldn't get along with that old white woman. Lord, honey,



she's . . . ' Pop's Christianity was making it difficult to find a word. He searched, failed, put his religion aside. 'She's a bitch'" (30).

Even when Thompson is describing times of exceptional travail, she integrates humor, typically religious humor. In the first two years on the homestead, for example, Thompson and her brothers watch their parents struggle and endure poverty, two new and bitter experiences for the children. The boys more than Era Bell grow increasingly cynical of their parents' steadfast faith in God and God's will. Verbally expressing faith in God is central to Tony and Mary's existence. For the boys, it becomes a sign of naiveté, even weakness; their misery and hunger tell them that God does not appear to be at all interested in helping them. Thus, as they watch their parents struggle on a daily basis to produce food for each meal, the children come to look upon strangers looking for a handout—especially those protesting too much religion—with suspicion and cynicism. *American Daughter* reminds readers how common it was for wanderers of all sorts to stop at the loneliest, most isolated homestead and ask for work or a meal. The Thompsons see a steady stream of mendicants and charlatans, many professing to be just "good Christian people" looking for a meal. The children are reluctant to exhibit what their parents insist on exhibiting: Christian charity. Thompson describes one such experience, reminiscent of a Flannery O'Connor short story, that comically illustrates the degree to which the children were justified in their cynicism but also blinded by it.

One evening, Era Bell comes home to find a group of strangers—"a Norwegian couple and a colored missionary woman"—in her parents' house. The effusive religiosity of the three immediately raises the ire of the children and, years later, the gentle satire of Thompson:

They stayed for dinner, a meal freely interspersed with "Amen," "Hallelujahs," and "Word-of-Gods." Hallelujah, coming between bites of boiled pig's feet, was too much

for Dick. He choked and left the table, Tom and Harry following. (37)

Thompson directs most of her humor and satire toward the self-proclaimed missionary:

The missionary woman was a little off the heathen trail, but still preaching the Gospel to all who would listen—and contribute to the price of a railroad ticket towards a warmer land. . . . "All I wants to do, praise God, is to get back to Kansas, hallelujah, and preach the Word, yes, Jesus!" That was her problem. (37)

Readers never learn what happens to the "missionary." But the children misjudge the Olsons, the genuine and generous Norwegian couple who become steadfast friends of the Thompsons.

Another integral element of Thompson's comic, religious rhetorical strategy is denominational humor. She is attuned to and humorously exploits the differences and nuances among Christian denominations in the Northern Plains.<sup>15</sup> Her account of the family's experience at the Nazarenes' Jamestown Holiness Camp illustrates this aspect of *American Daughter*.

Tony, who had formerly been a professional chef in Des Moines, had an enterprising mind and was always searching for ways to earn extra income. In 1917, while on a stint serving as a private messenger for the governor of North Dakota, Tony hears about a two-week Nazarene religious festival held at Jamestown Holiness Camp. Upon returning home, Tony approaches the Nazarenes and proposes that they employ him as their own professional cook for the two-week revival. The Nazarenes agree, giving the young Era Bell her first chance to witness a Nazarene revival. Thompson's approach to integrating religion into the narrative in this chapter is typical of her approach in other chapters: Thompson the adult autobiographer is humorous and satiric, but, recalling the fear and discomfort she felt as a

child, she also integrates the perspective of the child who is confused, intimidated, and frightened by the energy and tenor of fervent religious expression.

For example, Thompson the adult writer is gently satiric:

When we arrived Pop was having trouble with the white folk's religion, again hard put with the "Praise Gods" and the "Hallelujahs." New to him was this taking God over by the fiery stoves or back behind the meat block with the French carvers. . . .

Even Dr. Kane, the great evangelist, invaded the kitchen, slapped Pop's sweating back and said, "Praise the Lord, Tony! Say 'Praise the Lord!'"

"I'm a busy man, Reverend—got to get these folks fed."

"You're not too busy for God, are you, Tony?"

"No. It's not that. Just cookin' and prayin' don't mix."

"You're a Christian, aren't you, Tony?"

"Course I'm a Christian!" Pop bridled.

"You've been born again, haven't you, Tony?"

"Course I've been born again." Sweat rolled down his face.

"Don't you believe," said Dr. Kane, "that you can serve food and serve God at the same time?"

Pop took his big ladle out of the soup and laid it carefully down on the table. "Now what must I do with a man like this?"

Dr. Kane put his arm around Pop's shoulder, put his lips close to Pop's ear. "Say, 'Praise the Lord,' Tony. Say, 'Amen!'"

By the end of the season, my father could stop in the middle of baking a soufflé and say, "Amen." (85-86)

Thompson relates the order of a typical evening revival service with the humorous, satirical perspective of the adult, while gradually integrating the perspective of a child experiencing for the first time a fearful aspect of

low-church Protestantism. For instance, we read that the children first went to "tabernacle classes" where they learned to recite the books of the Bible "for no particular reason." Then the family went to "big tabernacle." Services began with singing, followed by several sermons: "The popular ones prefaced their sermon by telling funny stories, then, gradually, warming up to their subjects, preached and stormed and brought down upon the congregation the wrath, love, and the power of God." At this point, the rhetoric becomes more serious and less satirical as Thompson shifts the perspective to that of the child:

Each preacher made an eloquent plea: the slim ones, pointing gracefully towards heaven, tiptoed around, whispering sweetly, then stopped suddenly, stamped the floor, and shook their clenched fists at the very pits of hell; the fat ones jumped up and down in one spot, their voices going where their bodies could not. (87)

Thompson concludes the section by taking the reader fully into the child's fear:

There was a lot about hell at those meetings. I trembled beside my mother, doomed to eternal fire with the flames of purgatory lapping at my feet, for I was an age now to be responsible for my own soul—and pay full fare on a streetcar. Leaping down from their pulpit, the preachers walked up and down the sawdust aisles, pleading to the congregation. . . . Men and women flocked down to the front of the tent, and knelt in prayer and repentance baring their souls to God. Some stood up and cried and shook hands with the elders, laughing, testifying through their tears; those in a trance were carried off to cots in the rear of the bookstore, where they lay between heaven and hell, fighting with the devil. It was more like Colored Baptist than Colored Baptist, and I came away feeling guilty and afraid. (87-88)

There is a disconcerting sense of displacement in the last sentence; gone is the humor. In terms of religious community, the young Era Bell is twice displaced: from the comfortable, familiar memory of their black religious community in Iowa and now from this white religious community in North Dakota. Braxton recognizes displacement—geographic, racial, and familial—as a central theme of *American Daughter*, but she overlooks the problem of religious displacement, perhaps the most complex aspect of Thompson's coming-of-age autobiography.

Thompson experiences religious displacement in two ways, and when she writes of it, she does so in serious, not comic, terms. On the one hand, she and her family are displaced from the black church.<sup>16</sup> One might refer to this as her "outer" religious life. But she also describes the sense of religious displacement she experiences in her inner religious life, depicting her childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood all as periods of religious displacement. As *American Daughter* progresses, readers see the degree to which religious displacement compounds her and her family's sense of geographic and racial displacement.<sup>17</sup> This shifting rhetoric—between the comic and the grave—adds complexity not only to Thompson's treatment of religion and religious concerns but also to the autobiography as a whole.

In Des Moines, Thompson's parents were prominent members in their religious community: "Our Sunday mornings were spent in the Sunday School across the lake," she writes, "but the greater part of the day and much of the night found Trustee Thompson in the center of things religious at Colored Baptist downtown" (15-16). After moving to North Dakota, though, the family stops attending church: there is no black religious community, and they do not feel welcome in the area's white religious communities:

On Sundays Mother and Father walked arm in arm through the pasture to the grain fields to sit on the sunny slopes and dream

and plan for the farm that some day would be ours. We did not go to church, for there was none except the little Lutheran church in Driscoll. It must have been hard for them, my parents, to give up their worship. We still sang the old hymns and said the long prayers over the food, but the boys scoffed at the family Bible reading and grew cynical of Pop's religion, critical of his leadership on the farm. Father felt himself slowly losing his position as head of the house. (48-49)

In fact, the only kind of community they experience with other African Americans—religious or otherwise—occurs during holidays, when the black families of their region would celebrate together.

These celebrations constitute their only black religious community. When Thompson's mother dies in 1918, she and her father eventually move to Bismarck, where they join a church. But Thompson is at best ambivalent about this religious community and what it offers her; she writes very little about it.

The displacement from a black religious community exacerbates the spiritual isolation and displacement the young Thompson experiences as an adolescent, especially between 1918 and 1920. First, as previously mentioned, Thompson's mother, Mary, dies of a stroke in February 1918, when Era Bell is twelve. Second, in the summer of 1919, Thompson experiences what appears to be the most formative and trying summer of her adolescence, if only because her mother is not there to support the family. First, she and her brothers and father have had an especially difficult time coping with Mary's death:

I was glad when school was out, and I could again be with my family and my pets, but home was different now. Over it hung the apparition of my Mother's dreams, the shadow of my Mother's death. Gone from my brothers were the old fun and frivolity, replaced by a cold soberness that drew them farther and farther away from Father, and I



lived between two camps: the one guarded by self-pity and silence, the other by bitter restlessness. (112)

Second, during this mournful period they also experience an exceptionally hot and dry summer: drought conditions and grasshoppers plague their crops; their horses get mange; and two of their best cows and two calves die while wading in mud to escape the heat. Third, Thompson explains that as a child she was worried about World War I and what might happen to her and her country, all of which weighed on her father as well: "Even the two weeks at camp meeting failed to shake Father out of his stolid taciturnity, and the boys became more cynical, more bitter, hating now the land and the loneliness and the futility of fighting against the elements" (113). Finally, in the summer of 1919, race wars break out in Chicago. Hobart, who lives in Chicago, sends Thompson a copy of the *Chicago Defender*, a black newspaper. For the first time she reads about and sees images of the race riots. Worse, for the first time she reads an article about a lynching, sees photographs of the lynching itself and the body that was mutilated, then burned. It is this story that takes her to the depths of her spiritual despair and displacement:

For a long time, I could see the lifeless body dangling from the tree. To me it became a symbol of the South, a place to hate and fear. And Dick's civilization was a riot, where black and white Americans fought each other and died. I wanted never to leave my prairies, with white clouds of peace and clean, blue heavens, for now I knew that beyond the purple hills prejudice rode hard on the heels of promise, and death was its overtaking. And I wondered where was God. (113)

Whether or not Thompson actually wondered "where was God" is beside the point; as an autobiographer, she clearly intends to portray

herself as a young woman enduring physical, emotional, and spiritual despair.

As *American Daughter* progresses from here, readers encounter less humor and more existential, spiritual contemplation. Nevertheless, what impresses the reader is how Thompson, as a young adult, negotiates her growing sense of racial, cultural, and religious displacement with a thick-skinned, idealistic perspective. This negotiation comes to fruition at the end of *American Daughter*.

After graduating from Morningside College in 1933, Thompson moves to Chicago to pursue her dream of becoming a writer. She describes a poignant epiphany that occurs on the street before a storefront church where a black religious community is worshipping:

I had come to be entertained, but there was nothing amusing about these people now. Their blood flowed in my veins, their color, their features were mine, but not their God, for theirs was a faith beyond anything I had ever experienced. . . . When they sang "Holy!" the whole congregation was lifted to its feet. Some held up their hands and screamed, some stood mute, some cried. I sat tense and tight, trapped in the hard shell of my white folks' religion. (258)

Thompson recognizes what historian Albert Raboteau decades later would observe: the black church has played a central role in many African Americans' search for identity and, over the decades, has helped its members adjust to dramatic cultural and economic changes within society.<sup>18</sup> Raboteau's observation would not be particularly useful here if Thompson had not discussed the problem of being isolated from a black religious community. But in this and earlier passages, she portrays herself as a figure of religious displacement; she writes about being separated from the religious community that represents her family's roots and the religious community that would have given her a place to belong to and grow in her faith.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the poignant experience at the storefront church in Chicago, Thompson does not conclude *American Daughter* with a sense of disappointment, despair, and regret. She cannot; her demeanor and character have been tempered by the obdurate and unforgiving Northern Great Plains. Thompson is tough, undaunted by the specter of despair, and driven by an unyielding, infectious optimism.

This toughness and optimism undoubtedly helped Thompson forge an impressive career after the publication of *American Daughter*. In the same year, she took a position with Johnson Publishing Company, publisher of, among other things, the new magazine *Ebony*, for which she was associate editor from 1947 to 1951 and co-managing editor from 1951 to 1964. In 1964 she became international editor for the Johnson Publishing Company, a post she held, even in semiretirement, until her death. In her years with Johnson Publishing, Thompson interviewed and wrote about figures prominent in American culture, published on a wide array of topics, and traveled widely. For instance, her second book, *Africa, Land of My Fathers*, published in 1954, was a memoir about her travels throughout eighteen African countries. With fellow *Ebony* editor Herbert Nipson, she published *White on Black: The Views of Twenty-Two White Americans on the Negro* in 1963, an eclectic collection of essays by people ranging from William Faulkner to Jack Dempsey. In August of the same year, she covered Martin Luther King Jr.'s momentous "I Have a Dream Speech" in Washington, D.C. And in 1964 she published an article about cancer and her own radical mastectomy. Thompson remained in Chicago for the rest of her life, traveling frequently abroad and in the United States, making frequent trips to North Dakota. North Dakota has not been reticent in recognizing Thompson's achievements. In 1969 the University of North Dakota awarded her an honorary doctorate, and in 1979 the university changed the name of its Black Cultural Center to the

Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center. In 1976 Thompson received the Roughrider Award, the highest award given by the state of North Dakota. Portraits of the Roughrider recipients hang in the capitol building in Bismarck. Thompson died in 1986.<sup>19</sup>

In the last chapter, "My America," Thompson articulates an idealistic vision of "her America": a harmonious America, an America that will someday bridge the gulf that separates races, an America where anyone can forge an identity and develop a sense of belonging:

I know there is still good in the world, that way down underneath, most Americans are fair; that my people and your people can work together and live together in peace and happiness, if they have the opportunity to know and understand each other.

The chasm is growing narrower. When it closes, my feet will rest on a united America. (296)

The concluding passage calls to mind Culley's observation that, for many women, the act of writing autobiography is "ultimately an act of community building."<sup>20</sup> In "My America," and arguably throughout *American Daughter*, this is exactly what Thompson is doing: building a community upon the vestiges of her unique American experience.

## NOTES

1. Margo Culley, ed., *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), p. 3.

2. Ralph Ellison, "Stepchild Fantasy," review of *American Daughter*, by Era Bell Thompson, *Saturday Review of Literature* 29 (June 1946): 25.

3. See Joanne M. Braxton, *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition within a Tradition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp. 144-80.

4. Era Bell Thompson, *American Daughter* (1946; reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), p. 74. Further citations to *American Daughter* are given in parentheses in the text.

5. A decade earlier, the U.S. Census indicates that in 1910, the general population of North Dakota was 577,056; the black population was 61.

See *United States Census Data Browser*, retrieved 7 March 2003, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>.

6. Thompson uses her mother's and father's real names. Presumably to protect identities, she uses fictitious names for other family members and friends of the family. We use the family member's true name, and at the first mention include the fictitious name in parentheses. According to Thompson, Garrison convinced his brother that North Dakota held more opportunity for their children because there was less racial prejudice. Era Bell Thompson, interviewed by Larry Sprunk, North Dakota Oral History Project, Bismarck, N. Dak., 16 September 1975.

7. See Kathie R. Anderson, "Era Bell Thompson: A North Dakota Daughter," in *The Centennial Anthology of North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains*, ed. Janet Daley Lysengen and Ann M. Rathke (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1996), pp. 307-19.

8. Braxton, *Black Women Writing* (note 3 above), pp. 149, 159.

9. Culley, *American Women's Autobiography* (note 1 above), p. 8.

10. Braxton, *Black Women Writing* (note 3 above), pp. 139-49.

11. Braxton, *ibid.*, p. 144.

12. Braxton, *ibid.*, pp. 146; 158-59.

13. See Lynn Z. Bloom, "Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Twentieth-Century Women's Frontier Auto-

biographies," in *American Women's Autobiography* (note 1 above), p. 128.

14. Bloom, *ibid.*

15. Several of Thompson's accounts speak to and reflect denominational history, such as the spread of the Holiness Movement in the early twentieth century.

16. We use the term "black church" as it is used in scholarship: a religious body of Christians consisting primarily of African Americans.

17. On the relationship between identity and the black church, Albert Raboteau writes, "By conserving traditional religious culture, black churches gave black communities and individuals a significant sense of continuity with the past. By evoking familiar religious symbols to interpret novel circumstances, black pastors helped their people to accommodate disruptions caused by rapid change. See Albert J. Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p. 105. *American Daughter* is the story of someone who was "robbed" of this community.

18. Raboteau, *ibid.*, p. 116.

19. Biographical information is taken from Anderson, "Era Bell Thompson" (note 12 above), pp. 316-19.

20. Culley, *American Women's Autobiography* (note 1 above), p. 10.



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# ANCIENT WAY IN A NEW LAND

## BENEDICTINE EDUCATION IN THE GREAT PLAINS

MARIELLE FRIGGE, O.S.B.

In the first half of the sixth century, an Italian monk, Benedict of Nursia, provided a framework for Christian monastic life. In the last half of the nineteenth century, his descendants arrived in the Great Plains, part of the westward movement of Christian missionaries in North America. What could this ancient way of life offer to a new land of Native

tribes and immigrant farmers, traders, and soldiers? And what might this new land contribute to the shaping of a uniquely American form of monastic life?

These Benedictine men and women brought with them centuries of experience as learners and teachers, and they shared their educative way of life, as well as their schools, with Native peoples and European immigrants alike.<sup>1</sup> In turn, the land and peoples of the Great Plains have contributed to the evolution of Benedictine monastic life in North America to this day.

In the first part of this article I sketch three major characteristics of Benedictine education: an attitude of listening, a habit of discretion, and a holistic methodology. In the second section I explore the interaction of Benedictine education and its new prairie milieu. Here it becomes evident that, on the one hand, these monastic men and women brought their particular character to educational institutions on the Great Plains; on the other hand, the peoples and environment of this new land also promoted the shaping of a singular form of Benedictine life.<sup>2</sup>

KEY WORDS: Benedictines, Catholic Missionaries, Dakota Territory, Education, Indian Territory, Monasticism.

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# ORIGINS AND CHARACTER OF THE RULE OF BENEDICT

In order to understand the sort of education and educational institutions shaped by Benedictine monastics in the Great Plains, one must begin with the foundational document, the *Regula Benedicti*, or Rule of Benedict (henceforth RB).<sup>3</sup> The culture of Benedictine monasteries and schools in the new land was formed by this brief sixth-century monastic rule, but the word itself must be clarified, since for moderns the English translation of *regula* as "rule" implies a collection of legal strictures and procedures. However, the *regula* attributed to Benedict is more accurately understood as a framework or pattern for a way of life. While it is not a systematic work of theology, it certainly draws upon Christian scripture, theology, and practice to offer nothing less than an alternative culture, an educative way of life informed by the Christian gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, except for RB itself, only one source of information about Benedict exists, the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.<sup>5</sup> Historians and Benedictine scholars have long recognized that Gregory's work intends to teach and edify, and so cannot be naively considered an objective historical document. Still, basic facts of Benedict's life in *Dialogues II* have generally been accepted as accurate. For the past several decades a scholarly debate has challenged this view.<sup>6</sup> However, since consensus on the question has not been reached, Gregory's work serves here to sketch an outline of Benedict's life and work.

Benedict of Nursia lived in an era similar in many ways to our own. Born around 480 A.D. of an aristocratic Italian family, Benedict lived at a time of major shifts in both empire and church. The Roman Empire was giving way to a new, yet unformed civilization brought by invading tribes; Christianity had struggled through several centuries of heresy and refinement of doctrine. By Benedict's day, the Christian church had been transformed from a persecuted sect to the Roman state religion. Because of the latter development, many citi-

zens joined the church not out of religious conviction but for political expediency. In short, it was the twilight of an era for both Rome and the church, and the first streaks of a new dawn were, as yet, merely hope.

In this milieu, Benedict left his liberal studies in Rome to seek light in the desert as a hermit monk.<sup>7</sup> After he had lived the solitary life for some time, others sought to join him. Following several disheartening experiences with would-be monks who were apparently less committed to the discipline of monastic life than he, Benedict consented to become abbot, or "father," of a small group of cenobitic monks, those who live communal life. The Rule he later wrote indicates that Benedict became familiar with both Eastern and Western monasticism and numerous other early monastic rules and Christian writings. Most important, however, for his masterful synthesis of earlier tradition was his own experience of both solitary and communal monastic life.

Such integration of intellectual knowledge and wisdom born of experience characterizes RB itself and any educational endeavor of Benedictine monastics to this day. As noted above, RB seeks to lay the foundation of a way of life. Monasticism was an educational program from its beginnings, patterned on the earliest forms of Christian education. The church itself was considered a "school of Christ" in which education implied experiential knowledge of revealed truth expressed in scripture and Christian dogma; thus, monasticism included personal formation coupled with acquisition of knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

Benedictine monastic life, then, presents a program of studies that is organic, all-encompassing, and lifelong. It strives to teach knowledge integrated with wisdom. A monastery as "school" for those intending religious life must be distinguished from extern schools, designed for those who desired a Christian education but not a monastic life. However, the latter were from their earliest days patterned on the educational approaches of monastic life.<sup>9</sup> To understand the philosophy and practice of education brought to the Great Plains by



Benedictines thirteen centuries after RB was written, it is imperative to highlight several of RB's touchstones for monastic life and culture as a "school for the Lord's service."<sup>10</sup>

Benedictine scholar Mark Sheridan points out that a monastic rule "provides a practical guide for living and for the cultivation of virtue." As the work of a Christian monk, RB is rooted in the Judeo-Christian scriptures and strongly resembles the literature of those writings. Hence, "although it contains certain theological principles, it is derived primarily from, and reflects experience of, life. It is intended to be a guide to wise living in the practical situations of life."<sup>11</sup> Sheridan's description suggests why the wisdom of RB appeals to people beyond Catholic and even Christian circles. It simply makes a great deal of lived sense.

That RB intends to offer guidance for wise living in daily life also accounts for its best-known qualities: adaptability and flexibility. Unlike the earlier *Rule of the Master* (RM),<sup>12</sup> with which Benedict was clearly familiar, Benedict leaves many concrete, particular decisions to the discernment of abbot or community. The anonymous Master, writing perhaps twenty years before Benedict, attempts to legislate a precise course of action for innumerable specific situations. RB, on the other hand, allows and even encourages the abbot and community to learn sage decision-making through practice.<sup>13</sup>

#### BENEDICTINE EDUCATION

The above characterization of RB's educational program as schooling in and for wisdom already suggests several of its major principles. To illuminate the teaching and learning of Benedictine men and women in the Great Plains, I summarize three major characteristics of Benedictine education derived from RB: listening, discretion, holism. It should be emphasized that since RB proposes a way of life with educational purpose, these characteristics naturally interpenetrate and so lead to a certain unavoidable overlap and repetition.

Examining these educational principles is like observing a prism: while focusing on a particular facet, one can still see other sides, other colors; yet the prism is one.

In the mode of biblical wisdom literature, RB begins: "Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you; welcome it, and put it into practice." Numerous commentators through the centuries have stated that the single word "listen" sums up the whole of RB. One can certainly claim that it crystallizes RB's essential approach for both teaching and learning in the school for the Lord's service. Benedict here draws upon the biblical meaning of "listen": the Hebrew word *shema* means both listen and obey. In other words, the listening meant here is at once receptive and active; the hearer must attend with the very core of one's being (the "heart") and then act upon what is heard.<sup>14</sup> To whom does the monastic listen? First of all, to Christ, who is "master" (teacher) and father. Benedict repeatedly insists that monastics are to prefer nothing whatsoever to Christ.<sup>15</sup>

But in order to learn wise living in a multitude of concrete situations, one must listen to virtually everything. According to RB, cenobites choose a life of listening to the Rule itself and to the leader chosen by the community; they are to listen to the word of God in scripture, encountered in daily communal prayer and individual prayerful reading. All members of the community, including the abbot, are to listen to one another, including the youngest. Internal and external circumstances also call for careful listening: interior thoughts and attitudes, local conditions, the spirit of the times, seasons of the year, changes of weather, work conditions, bodily infirmity, individual gifts and limitations, even critical guests—all are to be heard and met with carefully considered response. As is evident, the hospitality for which Benedictines are known is but another facet of the foundational habit of listening.<sup>16</sup> By insisting that every member of the community bring a listening heart to all

aspects of life, RB further implies that in the school for the Lord's service, the one true teacher is Christ, and every monastic is both teacher and learner, listened to and listening.

Cultivating a habit of listening means that one takes in a great deal of data of many kinds. Hence, those in the monastic school must develop a second important characteristic, discretion. This is another notion that must be understood in its context of early Christianity in general and Benedictine monasticism in particular. The Latin word *discretio*, usually translated "discretion," denotes the ability to acquire comprehensive knowledge and then, through assessment and discrimination, set aside whatever is false and peripheral and discern what is true and essential. Salutary as amassed knowledge can be, it must be carefully understood, scrutinized, and evaluated if it is to guide concrete decision and action.

Hence monastic tradition held discretion in high esteem. John Cassian, one of the sources of RB, praised discretion as "the mother, the guardian, and the guide of all virtues."<sup>17</sup> In his *Dialogues*, Gregory the Great gave RB this highest monastic accolade, declaring it outstanding in discretion, teaching what is clearly learned through practice.<sup>18</sup> In brief, monastic life as educative program intends to form monastics in the habit of discretion, an ability to discern the best course of action in a particular set of circumstances.

RB 2 and 64, which concern the abbot and foremost teacher in the monastery, offer much instruction on teaching *discretio*.<sup>19</sup> The abbot/teacher should possess knowledge of considerable breadth and depth, which above all must be integrated with experiential knowledge.<sup>20</sup> As for didactic method, the abbot must "lead his disciples by a two-fold teaching of example, in word and deed."<sup>21</sup> The teacher who would exercise and so teach discretion must know each learner as an individual and adapt both content and method to each one's background, character, intelligence, and readiness.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, the habit of *discretio* requires the habit of listening.

Noting the relationship between listening and discretion points to a third major characteristic of Benedictine approaches to education: it is holistic and integrative. In RB, didactic content, method, and environment overlap in mutual influence and dependence. Given such a unitary vision of education, RB resists easy distinction of these various dimensions of an educational program. The holistic nature of Benedictine curriculum might be understood best by observing how three major aspects of monastic life work together in a kind of round dance of lifelong learning in the school for the Lord's service.

It often surprises first-time readers of RB that Benedict says little about the works or ministries of the monastery. This is because he is primarily interested in forming persons rather than workers. RB focuses on three vitally important facets of daily monastic life: prayer in common (called the "work of God"), individual sacred reading (*lectio divina*), and communal living. The first two obviously require literacy, since both require reading the Judeo-Christian scriptures.<sup>23</sup> But to understand adequately, and thus live wisely, the meaning of these texts, one also needs to understand their literary types and conventions, their historical context and relation to Christian doctrine. Clearly, such modes of scriptural prayer depend upon knowledge of considerable content. Further, such knowledge deepens through the experiential learning of day-to-day communal life.

Daily immersion in scripture intends to shape the monastic's awareness, understanding, desire, and moral behavior according to the word of God. No aspect of daily life is too mundane to accomplish such educational goals: receiving guests as Christ, cleaning clothing and garden tools carefully, treating kitchen utensils as sacred vessels, and cooking and serving meals are all intentional modes of teaching and learning what is contained in the scriptures.<sup>24</sup>

It is evident from their sixth-century beginnings that Benedictine monasticism itself

and Benedictine extern schools intended to create an educative culture, forming persons and communities in the matrix of Christian belief and practice. As elaborated above, a Benedictine curriculum employs holistic, integrated methods intended to develop an attitude of listening to myriad sources of knowledge and a habit of discretion, the ability to apply knowledge wisely in specific circumstances. RB provides a pattern for education as way of life rather than a framework for schooling as part-time activity. Still, through the subsequent centuries, monastics formed in such a way of life instinctively employed its attitudes and methods in the schools they founded.

When Benedictine missionaries came to the Great Plains in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they needed all the strengths of their ancient educational tradition. The convergence of European, Indian, and frontier cultures demanded acute listening, skillful use of discretion, and an integrative perspective on a daily basis. These hallmark characteristics of Benedictine culture shaped Great Plains monasteries and schools from their earliest days, and these characteristics endure in present-day monastic houses of men and women and their educational institutions. Additionally, life in the Great Plains helped shape a unique form of American Benedictine monasticism.

To illuminate how these Benedictine touchstones of education were embodied in the vast expanse of the Great Plains, in the remainder of this article I sketch several major challenges experienced by European Benedictines entering this new context. It will become evident that key characteristics of Benedictine education shaped both monasteries and schools on the prairie, and that the meeting of ancient way and new land also contributed to the continuing education of the Benedictines themselves.

#### BENEDICTINES ENCOUNTER THE NEW LAND

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the first American Benedictine foundations

were established in Pennsylvania. The Bavarian monk Boniface Wimmer, eager for a resurgence of Benedictine missionary activity, began what is now Saint Vincent's Abbey in Latrobe. In what was to become a familiar pattern for early American Benedictines, Wimmer soon sought Benedictine women to assist in the monks' missionary effort in a new land. By 1852 a small band of Bavarian Benedictine women, led by the twenty-seven-year-old Benedicta Riepp, answered the call.

Long driven by zeal for missionary work, Wimmer envisioned Benedictines living cenobitic life in new monasteries on the frontier, but going out from these centers to meet the needs of new people, time, and place. Monastics carrying out missionary endeavors at a considerable distance from the monastery could live in smaller branch houses, or "missions," in which they would continue to observe monastic life.<sup>25</sup> This represented major changes in lifestyle for European Benedictines, but the conditions of life in a new context seemed to demand such adaptation. Cenobitic life according to the Rule of Benedict would continue, but Benedictine listening and discretion would re-create it in new modes; in time, the "mission" model prevailed for American monasteries of both men and women.

With the westward movement of Benedictines to the Great Plains, still greater challenges awaited this new model of monastic life. The European monastics who arrived in American mission lands were German or Swiss, the one exception being French monks who settled in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Most had lived in large, self-enclosed monasteries with well-established gardens, farms, and schools, and were accustomed to safe, secure living quarters and liturgically well-appointed chapels. For the most part, the works of these communities were carried out within the confines of monastery buildings and grounds. A distinction of choir and lay members was common; the better-educated choir monks and nuns carried out pastoral and teaching activity while lay members of the monastery cared for its gardens, fields, animals, and the like. A



regular monastic horarium (daily schedule) provided for times of prayer, work, and other aspects of community life.

European Benedictines accustomed to such conditions of life could hardly have imagined what greeted them in the Great Plains. Within fifteen years of their arrival in Pennsylvania, monastic missionaries spread westward to prairie lands. Benedictine monks arrived at the new town of Atchison, Kansas, in 1858, followed by Benedictine women five years later. Martin Marty, first abbot of Saint Meinrad's Abbey in Indiana, arrived with several other monks at Standing Rock Indian Reservation in Dakota Territory in 1876, soon bringing a small group of monastic women. At about the same time, French monks took possession of Sacred Heart Mission in Indian Territory, soon to be followed by German American Benedictine women.<sup>26</sup>

In this vast swath of land already populated by numerous Native tribes, the Benedictine missionaries encountered even greater challenges and dangers than their East Coast predecessors. Their new tasks called for navigating the crossroads of European, Indian,<sup>27</sup> and nascent American cultures. Monastic men and women from a relatively homogeneous and sheltered environment were called upon to minister to non-Christian Indians, soldiers, farmers, traders, land speculators, miners, horse thieves, and gunslingers. The missionaries might move into already existing buildings or begin with nothing, constructing their own monasteries and schools. In either case, such buildings were often sod houses, rude claim shanties, or log and mud structures. The existence of few cities or towns and the sheer expanse of the plains necessitated lengthy, arduous travel by foot, horseback, or horse-drawn wagon or sleigh; the same factors commonly brought months or even years of isolation from all but a few companions.

For example, when Abbot Martin Marty was consecrated bishop of Dakota Territory in 1880, his jurisdiction covered 150,000 square miles, stretching more than 400 miles from north to south.<sup>28</sup> Like many of their fellow

missionaries, Benedictine priests in this diocese often rode a circuit of as much as 700 miles, serving the sacramental needs of Indians, white settlers, and soldiers.<sup>29</sup> Seasonal changes and concomitant extremes of weather exacerbated such already difficult conditions of life and ministry. An English monk visiting the Southern Plains described to his confreres at Ramsgate Abbey the fascinating terror of summer prairie fires and winter cold that left knives and forks frozen to plates on the monastic table. To his horror, when he dared look at the thermometer, it registered an astonishing (to him) 10 degrees below zero. He could not have dreamed of northern prairie blizzards and temperatures descending another 40 degrees.<sup>30</sup> Still other dangers threatened the Benedictines in the form of animal life never before encountered, including snakes, packs of coyotes, and herds of massive buffalo. On the Northern Plains, two missionary women in their tiny claim shanty were puzzled and frightened at the disappearance of milk from a bowl left out overnight; could a thief be invading their home in darkness? The discovery that a bull snake was having a nocturnal meal at their expense provided little relief.<sup>31</sup>

#### BENEDICTINE TEACHING AND LEARNING ON THE GREAT PLAINS

Into this new land of disparate cultures, languages, occupations, physical conditions, and human needs came men and women who followed a monastic rule thirteen centuries old. The brevity and adaptability of this ancient document, more focused on regulating a way of life than on establishing ministries, proved to be their mainstay. RB's educative vision of an integrated pattern of life characterized by careful listening and wise discernment left its mark on the peoples of the Great Plains; in turn, the Great Plains helped American Benedictines to shape a unique form of Christian monastic life.

It is abundantly clear that a religious, specifically Christian motivation impelled Benedictines to expand their missionary effort



FIG. 1. This building served as both monastery and school for Benedictine women at Fort Yates on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Dakota Territory, 1878. Photograph courtesy of Sacred Heart Monastery Archives, Yankton, SD. Reproduction rights granted by Sr. Victorine Stoltz, archivist.

westward into the prairie. Though perceived need demanded the work of religious education for Catholic immigrants and Indians, these monastic men and women concerned themselves with establishing not only schools but a way of life. Their first priority was to create monastic life for the prairie missionaries themselves, then to form residents of the Great Plains in a way of life rooted in the Christian gospel.

Two community histories bear witness to this Benedictine intuition that education is not a single activity of schooling but an entire mode of living. Describing the 1877 arrival of monks in Potawatami country (now Oklahoma), Joseph Murphy writes: "Even though buildings and improvements were in an incomplete state, the little band of Benedictines proceeded immediately to inaugurate the strict monastic routine. Father Robot [leader of the

group] had often alluded to the priority which this must have. His policy would be to let all other missionary activities gravitate around it."<sup>32</sup> Writing of the Benedictine Bishop Marty and his request for monastic women to assist with missionary activity on Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Claudia Duratschek likewise describes their work as that of founding not merely schools but an entire mode of life: "Unless the Bishop secured additional help, . . . he would be unable to bring the neglected children of the prairie to Christ, the Lover of little ones, and thus lay a firm foundation to Christian living among the Indians."<sup>33</sup>

The founding of both new monasteries and new extern schools in the Great Plains required the Benedictine habits of listening and discernment on a daily basis. In the dialectic between monastic culture and a developing American prairie culture, numerous schools

were founded on and shaped by Benedictine educational principles. At the same time, Benedictine life as a "school for the Lord's service" in the Great Plains continued to develop into its unique American form.<sup>34</sup>

Exploring the important contributions of Catholic missionaries in Indian boarding schools of the Northern Great Plains, James Carroll writes that religious sisters in these schools, many of whom were Benedictines, were more successful than most in establishing a "'middle ground' between Sioux culture and forces aimed at complete assimilation." Among other examples, he mentions "a bilingual school environment, the efforts to involve Indian adults in the life of the school, and the sincere attempts to blend Catholic beliefs with the Sioux culture."<sup>35</sup>

Benedictine men and women, having been schooled in monastic culture, often drew upon their habits of listening and discretion. Soon after his initial contacts with Native peoples of Dakota Territory, Marty realized that effective teaching and preaching required him to learn their language. Having already become adept at English, the Swiss monk set about studying Lakota, though he never felt that he mastered it. He did, however, delight in mutual teaching and learning; the Benedictine bishop trained the Sioux to sing Latin Gregorian chant in exchange for lessons in Lakota. On discovering a Sioux grammar, Marty intensified his efforts at bilingualism on the reservation for both the missionaries and the Indian people. He promptly reprinted the grammar and soon added a catechism, dictionary, and several hymns.<sup>36</sup>

Other Benedictine monks who came to assist Marty not only learned the Indians' language but immersed themselves in Native culture as well. A commemorative booklet celebrating the centennial of the Catholic Indian Mission on the Standing Rock reservation lavishes praise on three Benedictine priests who served there for decades: "[T]hey were so devoted and involved with their people that at their death it could truly be said that 'they were one with their people.' They not

only knew their language and culture and customs, but the mentality of the Indian people was also their mentality. They preached and ministered in accord with the culture and practices understandable to the Indian people." The author asserts that the monks were equally solicitous of the spiritual welfare of the white immigrant settlers in Dakota Territory.<sup>37</sup>

In their missionary work with Native tribes in the Great Plains, the Benedictines' attitude of listening and discretion also led to cultural adaptations in Catholic liturgy. Describing worship services at Sacred Heart Mission in Indian Territory, one observer wrote that there was much singing and "a lot of musical instruments about. I am told of a recent festival with organ, piano & violin for High Mass and a concluding morceau in Pottawatomie by a choir of Indians."<sup>38</sup>

Similar bicultural Catholic worship occurred elsewhere. In Dakota Territory, much singing and colorful processions appealed to the Sioux love for active participation. At times, their modes of participation did not strictly conform to prescribed rubrics but were accepted and incorporated into the Catholic liturgy. Duratschek states that "it was nothing unusual to have an Indian approach the altar" to light his pipe during mass. She quotes Weasel Bear's description of his people coming to mass as to "another council where we came to have a message for our benefit." As was their custom, the Indians sat on the floor of the church, lit a red stone pipe, and passed it around their circle. Weasel Bear adds that during the sermon, "[W]e listened carefully, and at each pause we voiced our approval in our usual way, 'Hau! Hau!'"<sup>39</sup>

In a number of ways, the developing American frontier culture and Benedictine culture offered considerable mutual support. In the Great Plains, a monastery could be a most welcome sight to all types of weary travelers making long, arduous prairie treks. Murphy writes that not only soldiers, government officials, cattlemen, and traders but "numerous unidentified individuals," some of them heavily armed, also sought Benedictine hospi-



ality at Sacred Heart Mission. The latter also were received with "typical Benedictine hospitality. Nobody asked questions about their identity, their destination, or their 'business.' To do so in the Territory was regarded as 'bad etiquette' and it could be 'unhealthy.'"<sup>40</sup> The wide assortment of visitors who received food, overnight shelter, and no questions from the monks might have been unaware that they were being received as Christ himself. But they most likely thought that these fellows were fitting well into the landscape of the Great Plains.

While Benedictines were establishing their own educative way of life on the Great Plains, they also set about founding schools for both Indians and white settlers. Usually, a school opened soon after Benedictine monks or nuns arrived at a site. A community of monks still located at Atchison, Kansas, became a priory there in 1858 and began accepting students within a year. Benedictine women arrived at Atchison in November 1863, and since a convent had been prepared for them, they were able to open a school for young women the following month.<sup>41</sup>

President Ulysses Grant's policy of allowing only one religious denomination on each Indian reservation facilitated both Catholic religious education and other schooling on a number of reservations, and so government Indian schools drew many monastic men and women. In these boarding schools, government rules intersected with the Benedictine belief that all aspects of life can educate. The government intended to Americanize Native tribes, and so schoolteachers were required to teach not only academic subjects but farming, dairying, stock-raising, housekeeping, cooking, sewing, and various trades.<sup>42</sup> The Benedictines, also concerned with bringing a gospel based way of life to the Indians, taught Christian doctrine, prepared their charges for Christian sacraments, and sought to imbue daily life and work with Christian values.

With increasing urgency, three plenary councils of the Catholic Church in the United States called for every parish to establish a

school, making extern schools an even more urgent task for Benedictines on the Great Plains, where rural parishes were often small, poor, and far-flung.<sup>43</sup> Parish schools sprang up throughout the windswept prairies; in time, Benedictine schools of higher education were also established. Within fifty years of the arrival of monastic educators, the Great Plains was dotted with their elementary and secondary schools and academies.<sup>44</sup>

As Benedictine men and women assisted the Catholic missionary thrust on the prairie, they helped shape numerous parishes and schools into integrative programs of formation in listening and discretion. At the same time, their monastic way of life was being reshaped by life experience on the Great Plains. Attending to new conditions of life, ministry, and physical environment, Benedictines adapted in various ways and further developed a unique form of monastic life that had begun with founding monks and nuns in Pennsylvania.

From their earliest days, American Benedictine women discovered that observance of enclosure, an assumed condition of life in Europe, would be difficult if not impossible for missionaries. While similar restrictions did not affect male Benedictines to the same degree, for centuries European monastic women had been enclosed or cloistered; they were not to travel beyond monastery grounds or walls except for strict necessity and with permission. Neither were outsiders allowed access to monastic quarters; the few who could enter, such as chaplains or physicians, were normally accompanied to restricted areas.

Beginning with Benedicta Riepp, Benedictine women in the new land discovered that walls were nearly nonexistent and dwellings so small that there were no sections of a building that could be set aside as cloister.<sup>45</sup> When they moved westward to the Great Plains, it became even clearer that enclosure would prove impossible. In government boarding schools, the Benedictines spent virtually day and night with their pupils; often a single building served as monastery, chapel, and classroom or student

dormitory. When parish schools for white settlers began, they often grew at such a rapid pace that they quickly outgrew their quarters. In such situations, it was not uncommon for a monastic bedroom to double as a classroom during the day. In addition, the Benedictines often took in abandoned orphans to share their meager food and shelter. As one modern monastic woman states, new conditions of life rendered enclosure "anachronistic." Even more fundamentally, American Benedictine women discerned that it was necessary to relinquish this practice in order to preserve the deeper value of hospitality.<sup>46</sup>

Another condition of life common among European monastics proved less than amenable to the American situation. Benedictines in Europe were accustomed to a stratified society within the monastic community, which distinguished choir and lay members. Choir monks and nuns took solemn vows; they were well educated, recited the full round of communal prayers in Latin, carried out pastoral and educational works, were eligible to serve in leadership roles, and voted in community decisions. Lay monastics took simple vows; since they could not read Latin they substituted other, shorter prayers for the monastic office, performed manual labor, and could not carry out any supervisory roles or participate in decision-making. In addition, choir and lay members usually wore distinctive clothing and lived in separate living quarters.<sup>47</sup>

Realities of life on the Great Plains, however, rendered most of these distinctions meaningless. The demands of extensive travel by horse or mule through rough terrain, raising food and caring for animals, battling prairie fires, blizzards, and swift rivers, and building homes, churches, and schools did not allow for niceties that designated who carried out what task. Further, the American ideals of democracy and equality did not favor distinctions in status readily accepted in European culture.<sup>48</sup> As in the case of enclosure, gradual elimination of differences between choir and lay members allowed Benedictines on the Great Plains to recover ancient values that

had become encrusted with various accretions. One such value was a participative, collaborative form of governance provided for in RB itself: "[A]s often as anything important is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call the whole community together. . . . all shall be called for counsel."<sup>49</sup> For prairie Benedictines, realities of daily life and the increasing influence of American ideals eventually brought an end to social stratification within the monastic community, and their ongoing education continued.

As has already been demonstrated, life on the Great Plains accelerated the process of adaptation that had begun with the first Benedictines in America. Perhaps the most striking innovation was the "branch house" or "mission" structure of monastic life. While European monks and nuns could hardly imagine living anywhere but the monastery, Wimmer's missionary vision from the beginning allowed for, and even demanded, exactly such an arrangement. Numerous locales needed schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and new immigrants arrived daily. Increasing need and great distance meant that small groups of monastic men and women settled in their places of ministry. Members of these mission houses, which were considered extensions of the monastery, established a regular monastic horarium as they strove to establish and maintain the essentials of their way of life: prayer, work, and communal living.<sup>50</sup>

Once again, Benedictines were required to create a whole pattern of life as a school for the Lord's service. Once again, listening to both their tradition and their current, concrete situation demanded discretion, deciding the most faithful course of action in particular circumstances. By the time these men and women reached the prairie, branch houses were well on the way to becoming a widely accepted form of monasticism in America. One monastic historian states that as early as 1880, this innovative form of Benedictine life was considered the norm in the new land.<sup>51</sup> On the Great Plains, ever-expanding need, distance, and challenging



FIG. 2. *Mount Marty College Learning Center, Yankton, SD, 2003.* Photograph courtesy of Nancy Nicholls. Permission to reprint granted by Office of Public Relations, Mount Marty College, Yankton, South Dakota.

physical conditions demanded continuance and expansion of this new model of monastic life. Even in the poverty and physical deprivation of prairie branch houses, every effort was made to retain the fundamental elements of Benedictine life. A tiny three-room house could be arranged for prayer, hospitality, and community living; if a kitchen table and bed sheet must serve as altar and altar cloth, so be it. Essentials must be preserved.<sup>52</sup>

## CONCLUSION

From their sixth-century beginnings, the essentials of Benedictine monasticism, grounded in the Christian gospel, were integrated into a way of life conceived as a school for the Lord's service. Monasticism as an educative way of life endures to this day on the prairie; at present, there are Benedictine monasteries and/or branch houses in every Great Plains state and province. Extern schools of various kinds continue, albeit with reduced numbers of monastic teachers, administrators, and staff. However, currently there are four Benedictine preparatory schools on the Great Plains, with student populations ranging from

120 to 1,180.<sup>53</sup> In addition, five Benedictine colleges and universities span the Great Plains from north to south: Saint Peter's College, Muenster, Saskatchewan; University of Mary, Bismarck, North Dakota; Mount Marty College, Yankton, South Dakota; Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas; and Saint Gregory's University, Shawnee, Oklahoma.<sup>54</sup> Because monastic education stresses formation of whole persons, centers of spiritual growth merit mention among educational institutions. At present, eighteen Benedictine retreat houses and spirituality centers from Canada to Texas welcome to the Great Plains spiritual seekers of both Christian and non-Christian traditions.<sup>55</sup>

In their encounter with this new land, prairie monastics listened to the people, time, and place of their new context, learning and teaching in both monastery and school. They shared their way of life with the peoples of the Great Plains in numerous educational institutions; at the same time, in new circumstances they adapted many externals of their ancient way of life. As Benedictine men and women today continue to discern the best mode of living and sharing their communal life of prayer and work,



they are certain to meet new circumstances, new challenges. But it appears that Benedict's ancient way, begun nearly fifteen centuries ago, not only survives but intends to continue teaching and learning on the Great Plains.

## NOTES

1. While it must be acknowledged, especially in hindsight, that there were some negative effects of Christian missionary schools, this article focuses on positive contributions.

2. Within the confines of a brief article, it would be impossible to explore fully the numerous Benedictine foundations on the Great Plains. I have chosen examples from the Northern, Central, and Southern Plains. Readers should also be aware that certain external modifications of Benedictine life had already begun east of the Great Plains. However, I demonstrate how the movement westward to the Great Plains hastened and enlarged upon such adaptation.

3. All quotations from the Rule of Benedict (RB) are taken from RB 1980: *The Rule of Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. Timothy Fry et al. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1981). Since RB was originally written for men, masculine references will be retained in quotations. RB has, however, become the foundational document for both male and female Benedictines. Therefore, this article will use "monastic" as a noun referring to both monks and sisters; similarly, "monastery" will denote Benedictine foundations of both men and women. American Benedictine women are referred to as "sisters" rather than "nuns."

4. According to the definition of one modern educator, it could be claimed that RB offers a "curriculum," described by Eliot Eisner as "a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students" (*The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, 2d ed. [New York: Macmillan, 1985], p. 45, emphasis his).

5. A helpful translation with commentary of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues II* is *The Life of St. Benedict*, trans. Hilary Costello and Eoin de Bhaldraithe, with commentary by Adalbert de Vogue (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 1993).

6. Claude Peifer, one of the participants in this debate, wrote in 1980, "[T]here can be no question that Gregory gives us genuine facts about the life of St. Benedict" (Fry et al., RB 1980 [note 3 above], p. 76). More recently, he has stated, "The question is still under discussion," in "The Origins of Benedictine Monasticism: State of the Question," *American Benedictine Review* 51, no. 3 (Sept. 2000): 315. See also Francis Clark, "Saint Benedict's Biography and the

Turning Tide of Controversy," *American Benedictine Review* 53, no. 3 (September 2002): 305-25.

7. For a detailed treatment of Benedict's cultural and religious milieu, see Pierre Riche, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. John J. Contreni (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1976), and Fry et al., RB 1980 (note 3 above), pt. 1.

8. Elias Matsagouras, *The Early Church Fathers as Educators* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Pub. Co., 1977), p. 31. Contemporary religious educator Maria Harris reminds Christians of today that "the church does not have an educational program, it is an educational program" (*Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989], p. 47, emphasis hers).

9. Matsagouras states that some of these extern schools existed already at the end of the fourth century, and in some cases included both children and adults (*ibid.*, pp. 96-97).

10. RB prologue 45.

11. Mark Sheridan, "The Relevance of the Rule Today," in Fry et al., RB 1980 (note 3 above), p. 145.

12. *The Rule of the Master*, trans. Luke Eberle, with an introduction by Adalbert de Vogue (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977).

13. RM, for example, finds it necessary to specify that monks five paces or more from the monastery need not return there for communal prayer. They may pray where they are, they should do so in groups of three, they are to bow their heads while praying the doxology, etc. (RM 55). On the same topic, Benedict simply says that the abbot determines how far monks at work should go in order to return to the monastery for prayer (RB 50:1-2). The Master even goes so far as to lay down particular regulations concerning the need to cough or spit during community prayer (RM 47-48).

14. W. Mundle, "Hear, Obey," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), p. 173. In biblical thought the heart is intimately involved in carrying out what one hears, for "the will originates in the heart," and "the idea of responsibility is particularly related to the heart" (T. Sorg, "Heart," in Brown, p. 181).

15. RB 4:2, 5:2, 72:11.

16. Benedict's teaching on the reception of guests also differs greatly from that of RM. While RM evinces suspicion and mistrust of visitors, even traveling monks, RB says with utter simplicity that all guests are to be received as Christ himself (RB 53:1). Benedict even calls for a bow or prostration to the guest, since it is actually Christ who is welcomed (RB 53:7).

17. John Cassian, *Conferences* II.4-5, in *John Cassian: Conferences*, trans. and with a preface by

Colm Luibheid. *The Classics of Christian Spirituality Series* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 63-64.

18. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II.3.

19. Claude Peifer writes that the "entire purpose" of the abbot's relation to the monks "is educative, in the sense of spiritual formation." In Fry et al., RB 1980 (note 3 above), pp. 355-56.

20. RB 64:9. The abbot ought to be "learned in divine law, so that he has a treasury of knowledge from which he can bring out what is new and what is old."

21. RB 2:11-12.

22. The importance of knowing and adapting to each individual in his or her particular circumstances of age, ability, temperament, and readiness appears repeatedly in RB, most emphatically in 2:23-29. In 64:19, Benedict sums up the importance of discretion for the abbot/teacher: drawing upon "discretion, the mother of virtues, he must so arrange everything that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak have nothing to run from."

23. Requirements for daily communal prayer and sacred reading indicate that Benedict expected all monks to know "letters." In addition, RB further states that during Lent "each one is to be given a book from the library, and is to read the whole of it straight through" (RB 48:15). Those "unwilling or unable to study or read" are chided as "remiss and indolent" (RB 48:23).

24. See RB 53, 31-32, 35. Even such menial tasks as "kitchen service" are deemed opportunities to "serve one another in love" (RB 35:1-6).

25. Judith Sutura, *True Daughters: Monastic Identity and American Benedictine Women's History* (Atchison, Kans.: Mount Saint Scholastica, 1987), pp. 27-28. The original intent was that these branch houses would eventually become new monasteries, but in fact this did not become the norm. Since canon law of the Catholic Church at the time placed greater restrictions on monastic women than men, particularly regarding enclosure, "missions" presented more difficult questions for Benedictine women in America. The intricacies of this matter, as well as the contentious relationship between Boniface Wimmer and Benedicta Riepp, are beyond the scope of this article. Sutura's work deals with both issues, especially the former.

26. Ann Kessler, *Benedictine Men and Women of Courage: Roots and History* (Yankton, S.Dak.: Sacred Heart Monastery, 1996), pp. 339-87.

27. Since sources of this era refer to indigenous peoples of the Great Plains as "Indians," I chose to use this term rather than "Native Americans" as is current today.

28. Kessler, *Benedictine Men and Women of Courage* (note 26 above), p. 354.

29. Patrick J. Ahern, ed., *Catholic Heritage in Minnesota South Dakota North Dakota* (St. Paul, Minn.: Archbishops of the Province of Saint Paul, 1964), p. 212.

30. Joseph F. Murphy, *Tenacious Monks: The Oklahoma Benedictines, 1875-1975: Indian Missionaries, Catholic Founders, Educators, Agriculturalists* (Shawnee, Okla.: Benedictine Color Press, 1974), pp. 116-17. Murphy quotes liberally from fifteen letters of Thomas Bergh to his superior and confreres at Ramsgate in England. This correspondence from 1885-86 provides, in colorful detail, insight into pioneer Benedictine life on the Great Plains and a European monk's perception of this life. The "Fort Yates" collection in the archives of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.Dak., gives further testimony to harsh winter conditions on the Northern Plains. An undated TS, "Reverend Father Bernard Strassmaier, O.S.B.: Fifty Years a Missionary among the Sioux," comp. Frank Bennett Fiske, describes the priest's narrow escape from the 1888 blizzard in Dakota Territory that killed 150 schoolchildren, teachers, and others. Saint Bernard's School Chronicle of 1935-36 records a temperature of minus 47 degrees Fahrenheit and related difficulties: "Water frozen for 10 weeks—melted snow. . . . lack of coal—school closed for one week."

31. Claudia Duratschek, *Under the Shadow of His Wings: History of Sacred Heart Convent of Benedictine Sisters Yankton South Dakota 1880-1970* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: North Plains Press, 1971), p. 105. Chapters 5 and 6 provide numerous other details concerning daily life and challenges of Benedictine life on the prairie in the late nineteenth century.

32. Murphy, *Tenacious Monks* (note 30 above), pp. 71-72. The author laconically adds that in practice, this ideal proved difficult to maintain. He then outlines the monastic horarium of 1877, which had the monks rising at 3:00 A.M. and retiring at 8:00 P.M.

33. Duratschek, *Under the Shadow* (note 31 above), p. 75. The author also mentions Marty's wish to "wean the Sioux from the sun-dance and from the influence of their medicine men." From today's perspective, it might be said that this displays a European colonialist, superior attitude. However, the fundamental intent of inaugurating a new way of life believed to be for the people's betterment is evident. As seen above, Marty soon learned to respect and incorporate elements of Native culture with Christian ritual.

34. In her excellent study *The Reshaping of a Tradition: American Benedictine Women, 1852-1881* (St. Joseph, Minn.: Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict, 1994), Ephrem Hollermann pinpoints six "Americanizing factors" that shaped Bavarian Benedictine women's early tradition: "the frontier, the

European immigrant population, the need for education, the missionary character of American Catholicism, pragmatism, and idealism" (p. 225). While Hollermann's study focuses on Benedictine women, these same factors had considerable influence on Benedictine men in the new land as well. In her introduction, the author summarizes several challenges and difficulties specific to the women's communities (pp. xvi-xvii); see also Sutera, *True Daughters* (note 25 above).

35. James Carroll, "Self-Direction, Activity, and Syncretism: Catholic Indian Boarding Schools on the Northern Great Plains in Contact," *US Catholic Historian* 16, no. 2 (spring 1998): 81. The author focuses on late-nineteenth-century boarding schools on four reservations: Devils Lake and Standing Rock, N.Dak., and Rosebud and Pine Ridge, S.Dak.

36. Kessler, *Benedictine Men and Women* (note 26 above), p. 358. There are three major dialects among the Sioux: Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota. These languages are notoriously difficult, and Marty once lamented that mastering Lakota was nearly impossible for any European over the age of thirty.

37. David J. Clements, "Built on a Firm Foundation": *Standing Rock Centenary, 1873-1973* (Fort Yates, N.Dak.: Catholic Indian Mission, n.d.), p. 47. The three monks lauded here are Bernard Strassmaier, Francis Gerschwyler, and Martin Kenel. Clements also reproduces bylaws of the Saint Joseph and Saint Mary Society handwritten in a Native language (pp. 36-38). The society, established by Marty, appealed to the Sioux love of councils and gatherings.

38. Thomas Bergh, quoted in Murphy, *Tenacious Monks* (note 30 above), p. 114.

39. Duratschek, *Under the Shadow* (note 31 above), pp. 86-87. The author also illustrates the incorporation of traditional Indian culture into Catholic visual art; a photo shows the statue of "Our Lady of the Sioux" (Mary with the infant Jesus in Native garb) at Saint Joseph's Indian School, Chamberlain, S.Dak. (p. 89). School, church, and statue remain to this day.

40. Murphy, *Tenacious Monks* (note 30 above), p. 73.

41. Kessler, *Benedictine Men and Women* (note 26 above), p. 340.

42. Office of Indian Affairs, *Rules for the Indian School Service* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), pp. 16-17.

43. Hollermann, *Reshaping of a Tradition* (note 34 above), pp. 250-51. One of these councils, all held at Baltimore between 1852 and 1885, even declared that pastors who failed to provide parish schools were guilty of grave sin. However, Ahern observes that such an ideal was impractical, if not impossible, for many small prairie parishes. Some-

times arrangements were made for religious sisters to teach secular subjects in local public schools, paid by and subject to them; Catholic children remained for religious instruction after other classes. Such solutions met with varying levels of acceptance by Protestants and Catholics (pp. 161-62).

44. My own monastic community provides but one example of the widespread establishment of educational institutions on the Great Plains. Various documents in the archives of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.Dak., show that within fifty years of the arrival of a handful of founding women, this monastery had provided all or part of the staffing for thirty schools; some were short-lived, some endured for decades.

45. Sutera, *True Daughters* (note 25 above), p. 24; see pp. 27-30 for discussion of differing restrictions on male and female monastics.

46. Hollermann, *Reshaping of a Tradition* (note 34 above), pp. 278-79; Duratschek, *Under the Shadow* (note 31 above), pp. 103-5.

47. Joel Rippinger, *The Benedictine Order in the United States: An Interpretive History* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 147. See chapter 9 for a discussion of how American Benedictine men and women struggled to eliminate the European system of choir and lay members.

48. The issue of distinctions between choir and lay members was often contentious and complicated, and it took decades to reach some level of resolution in practice. For Benedictine women, certain ambiguities and difficulties remain to this day in the *Code of Canon Law* of the Catholic Church. See Sutera, *True Daughters* (note 25 above), chap. 5, and Hollermann, *Reshaping of a Tradition* (note 34 above), chap. 5.

49. RB 3:1-3. It is worthy of note that in a time and place that accorded great status and privilege to age, Benedict stipulated that all, even the youngest, are to be called for counsel, because "the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger."

50. Sutera, *True Daughters* (note 25 above), pp. 56-58; Hollermann, *Reshaping of a Tradition* (note 34 above), pp. 246-51.

51. Hollermann, *ibid.*, p. 251.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 271; Duratschek, *Under the Shadow* (note 31 above), pp. 104-5.

53. Two of these four schools are located at Atchison, Kans.; the others are at Elkhorn, Nebr., and Tulsa, Okla. International Commission on Benedictine Education, retrieved 5 September 2003, <http://www.osb.org/icbe>.

54. Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities, retrieved 19 January 2003, <http://www.osb.org/acad/abcu.html>.

55. Association of Benedictine Retreat Houses, retrieved 19 January 2004, <http://www.osb.org/retreats/index.html>.



# FAIRY CASTLE OR STEAMER TRUNK?

## CREATING PLACE IN O. E. RØLVAAG'S *GIANTS IN THE EARTH*

DIANE D. QUANTIC

What happens when humans move beyond the boundaries of civilization? Does the very act transform them? How do they define themselves in apparently empty space? Throughout the nineteenth century, thousands of Americans headed west to the frontier, the borderland between civilization and wilderness. Most went willingly, confident or desperately hopeful that they would have the freedom to create a place of their own and, in the process, recreate themselves. Before they set out for the

frontier, they imagined it a garden, based on the myths of plenty and entitlement that were described in boosters' letters, newspaper accounts, railroad brochures, and the hyperbole of hope. Not all went willingly, however. Some followed reluctantly, fearing that in such an unsettled space they would themselves be transformed into bestial figures, detached from their pasts and left without culture or society to replace familiar habits and rituals. Many, their hopes faded or their fears confirmed, headed back to the more familiar East. This continuous ebb and flow is one of the central themes of Great Plains literature. Since Hamlin Garland began to write his stories of Iowa and Dakota farmers, authors have explored the effects wrought by people who transformed much of the grasslands into cash crops and the impact that the place itself had on these new arrivals.

For over thirty years I have been reading and teaching O. E. Rølvaag's novel *Giants in the Earth* (1927),<sup>1</sup> fascinated by his account of the process by which a social group—Norwegian immigrants, in this instance—establishes “the spaces to which the group belongs and from which its members derive some part of

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FIG. 1. O. E. Rølvaag, c. 1928. Courtesy of The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.

their shared identity and meaning."<sup>2</sup> Rølvaag's story is grounded in the relationship between the undifferentiated environment and the built environment; that is, the structures that anchor people in place and define the parameters of human existence where geographical landmarks are few.<sup>3</sup> Houses, barns, country schools, and rural churches create discernible shapes that can provide shelter for humans and their animals on the open plains and places for the community to become established. The buildings reveal individual and communal responses to a particular place and differentiate one place from another. This paper is a discussion of the ways Rølvaag elicits this process in both the land and the people who settled in the Great Plains.

*Giants in the Earth* is a classic account of the struggles that occur when men and women confront space without identifiable bound-

aries, apparently devoid of historical or mythical past. In the expansive Great Plains, Per Hansa experiences an explosive release of energy, a sense of freedom to create a place of his own imagining. His wife, Beret, cannot share his vision. Instead, she imagines mythical Norwegian trolls in the unfamiliar landscape, malevolent giants that lurk in the very land itself and resist human occupation. For her, their homestead is a void she can imagine only in terms of what is *not* there. Rølvaag juxtaposes visions of the costs and rewards of migration and transformation.<sup>4</sup> He uses the structures that Per Hansa imagines into reality as well as the fields he plows and plants to signify this transformation.

#### PLACE AND FRONTIER

At least since Frederick Jackson Turner invoked its demise in 1893, we have been trying to come to terms with both the concept of the frontier as America's manifest destiny, safety valve, or democratic utopia, and the reality itself, technically an area with fewer than two people per square mile.<sup>5</sup> Although we acknowledge the misnomer for a region that had been inhabited for hundreds of years by indigenous tribes, "the frontier" still resonates not only in our history and literature but in the American psyche. We have described, denied, defined, and debunked the term until, in popular iconography, it has been reduced to a handy label for a theme park or a packaged adventure tour.

Among scholars who consider the Great Plains, the region most often equated with the frontier in the popular mind, the term *frontier* remains an important point of thematic and geographic reference. Scholarship in cultural geography, history, literature, and philosophy that argues for the restoration of *place* as a component of the discussion of the time-space continuum provides a useful frame for this discussion. In traditional debate, a place such as the frontier is a line that moves on a linear construction of time. As Edward Casey has pointed out in *The Fate of Place* (1997), this

emphasis on time as the measure of progress has relegated *place* to a minor role in the traditional European American concept of historical continuity.<sup>6</sup> In this book and in a companion volume, *Getting Back into Place* (1993), Casey makes a strong case for reconsideration of place as an essential component in the discussion of human activity. Instead of considering culture as a product of events lined up along a time line, Casey and other scholars consider *where* events occur: how men and women interact with the places they are and how those places define society and culture.<sup>7</sup>

In a place-centered discussion, *frontier* is not a barrier or a border between civilization and wilderness like a fence, something to be cut away to make room for an expanding civilization. Rather, it is a liminal space: an acknowledged, inhabited landscape where people can consciously choose to remain between one culture and another, suspended, as it were, not in a place but "someplace else," as Casey puts it. For centuries, perhaps, before the invasion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by migrants from the eastern United States and Europe, Indian tribes moved through the region, responding not to official mandates or promotional hype, but to supplies of crops and game, moving from place to place, returning or leaving, in response to the seasons. They knew the places in the Great Plains intimately and instinctively: their concept of place dictated living lightly on the land. They left little evidence of their occupancy so that the newcomers, intent on transforming the place, could ignore their faint marks on the land. Settlers, instead of recognizing the grasslands as an inhabited *place*, set out to survey the vast prairie stretches into grids: in the process, they changed themselves as well. This is especially evident in Great Plains literature where, in story after story, new arrivals act out the transformation of the prairie space into ordered grids of crops and farmyards. For some new arrivals, the task is empowering, illustrating the ability of determined people to change the land and to be

changed themselves in the process. For others, this apparently amorphous region is not a place that can be transformed but is rather a site of resistance: a place where one is, often tragically, *displaced*.<sup>8</sup>

#### DISPLACEMENT

Per Hansa and his wife, Beret, perhaps more than any other characters in Great Plains literature, represent the polar extremes in their approach to place on the open prairies. Per Hansa imagines a fairy castle, a metaphor for his self-confidence: he can dream anything into reality. From the moment they arrive on their claim, he begins the process of *implacement*, of creating a *place* on the unmarked land. Beret, meanwhile, attends to her steamer trunk, her link with the familiar places in Norway that she abandoned when she acquiesced to her husband's determination to emigrate. It is the one possession that remains with her for the rest of her life on their Dakota farm. At first, in the open prairies with no familiar trees or mountains, no fjords or sea, Beret feels alienated and abandoned. Per Hansa immediately identifies their homestead as a place, but Beret remains disoriented and estranged from her family and their fellow immigrants. To her, their claim is a fragile, ineffective defense against nature's fierce intent. While Per Hansa imagines a fairy kingdom and sets out to create a practical homestead, Beret sees only crude structures that are barely discernible against the plains' horizon. For her, their homestead remains an undefined dot in the wilderness, in part because she refuses to recognize her husband's efforts to create a place—a fairy castle, even—though she knows he intends it as his gift to her.

The dialectic embodied in Per Hansa and Beret reflects Rølvaag's larger purpose. The American myth of progress, a linear concept of physical and metaphorical movement, is embodied in the supremely confident dreamer Per Hansa. However, Beret distrusts the physical displacement of immigration masquerading



as progress, even as Per Hansa sees unlimited opportunity to create his fairy kingdom. She suspects that humans who move beyond the boundaries of civilization risk transforming themselves into barbaric products of the surrounding wilderness.<sup>9</sup> As April Schultz has pointed out, assimilation was a concern current in the 1920s when Rølvaag was writing.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, Rølvaag, like many other immigrants, was aware of the costs of immigration. He witnessed the second generation, many of them his students at St. Olaf College, abandon their parents' language and Old World culture and buy into the American ideal of individualism and material success.<sup>11</sup> He sympathizes with Beret, who is acutely aware of the threat of American individualism that energizes her husband and causes him to commit acts that are illegal and sinful in Norwegian culture, the only context she can reference. Rølvaag and his character Beret fear the loss of both psychological and cultural identity in a space without evidence of anything familiar.

The opening pages of *Giants in the Earth* present a vivid account of humans in a landscape devoid of identifiable places. Per Hansa and his family are moving west into Dakota Territory, their habitation a barely usable wagon taken from a scrap heap when their own wagon could not be repaired (4). They are alone. Per Hansa cannot admit to his wife that he has lost the trail of the other Norwegian settlers, that they are adrift (one of Rølvaag's frequent uses of mariners' terminology) in the wilderness. Beret needs no words to reinforce her intuitive notion that her husband is taking them "beyond the end of the world" (9). A landscape that should include markers such as trees or hills and, most important, signs of human habitation, instead consists of smooth prairies that seem to be indistinguishable space: "Had they traveled into some nameless, abandoned region? Could no living thing exist out here, in the empty, desolate, endless wastes of green and blue?" (37). Even Per Hansa has to admit to himself that he does not know where they are: a landscape without landmarks is a true wilderness.

If Per Hansa is concerned, Beret is terrified. Her displacement is more radical than her husband's temporary disorientation. As Casey points out, if we become disoriented, we find ourselves in an atmosphere not anchored, much less centered, in our own body: we are literally disoriented.<sup>12</sup> Per Hansa remains alert, and when he happens upon their compatriots' camp his navigational instincts soon lead them to the other Norwegians at Spring Creek, the site of their homestead at the far edge of western settlement. The families are living in barely definable spaces, tents and makeshift shelters created from the now immobilized immigrant wagons. Even these minimal structures should create a landscape, a conscious construction in space. While the *environment* includes everything that surrounds us whether we acknowledge it or not, a *landscape* must be visualized as a place, defined by a conscious viewer who interprets what is before him or her.<sup>13</sup> To the immigrants, the camp is evidence of their minimal reconstruction of their environment into an identifiable place. Beret alone is disoriented, unable to recognize any way to anchor herself in a space with no apparent geographical markers.

As D. W. Meinig says, "Every landscape is a code and its study may be undertaken as a deciphering of meaning, of the cultural and social significance of ordinary but diagnostic features."<sup>14</sup> In Per Hansa and Beret, Rølvaag has created characters who seem to be at opposite poles in this process of deciphering and defining the landscape. While Per Hansa instinctively evaluates the landscape, reading mutton bones on the trail and conceptualizing a house/barn from the prairie sod, Beret cannot see anything to decipher. "How will human beings be able to endure this place? . . . Why, there isn't even a thing that one can *hide behind!*" (29). If, as Meinig and other scholars suggest, each person defines and interprets the landscape as a part of the process of emplacement, Beret, still grounded in the Norwegian landscape of fjords and towering mountains and unable to see the flat and apparently featureless landscape as any place at all, fears

that she will become undefined, essentially erased.

For their first weeks on the prairie, Rølvaag's characters are in a geographical void: they are unable to "read" the landscape that reveals no human-made markers. All the members of the small community feel "they [have] gone back to the very beginning of things," even beyond historical time (32). None of them can articulate this peculiar mood:

[It] lurked in the very vastness and endlessness surrounding them on every hand; it even seemed to rise like an impalpable mist out of the ground on which they sat.

This mood brought vague premonitions to them, difficult to interpret. . . . No telling what might happen out here . . . for almost anything *could* happen! . . .

They were so far from the world . . . cut off from the haunts of their fellow beings. (32)<sup>15</sup>

#### CLAIMS TO THE KINGDOM

As the geographer Edward Relph has pointed out, "[P]lace is not just the where of something; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon."<sup>16</sup> Relph explains that we react emotionally to the space we perceive around us: "Space is never empty."<sup>17</sup> However, Beret cannot imagine a home in such infinitude. Even at the most basic, tactile level, she cannot identify any links to a familiar human environment:

Here no warbling of birds rose on the air, no buzzing of insects sounded; even the wind had died away; the waving blades of grass that trembled to the faintest breath now stood erect and quiet, as if listening, in the great hush of the evening. (37)

Although Beret has eyes and ears, she has no way to associate what she sees and hears with her own aesthetic, the familiar, remembered Norwegian landscape. As Catherine M.

Howett has suggested, western Europeans and Americans place a high priority on the way places look: we expect a landscape to be "readable," but the translation of the visual into some sense of aesthetic value of a place is a cultural response.<sup>18</sup> Beret cannot "read" a landscape that is devoid of her own cultural referents.<sup>19</sup>

Per Hansa, on the other hand, has clear intentions, and his active imagination enables him to envision a place with fields of his own and a home for his family. For him, the prairie is a space where he is free to create an empire that he will be the first to own. He sets out to impose his own concept of an ideal homestead on the unmarked prairie expanse.<sup>20</sup> However, from their arrival, Per Hansa and the others must contend with other claimants to the kingdom. Tønseten assures Per Hansa that he has discovered no signs of human life, "Neither Israelites nor Canaanites! I was the first one to find this place" (34), but his claim is soon challenged: on their first inspection of Per Hansa's claim, Per Hansa finds an Indian grave. This fact colors their response to a landscape that is, in fact, a place with a long human history. For Per Hansa, the discovery is "rotten luck" because it negates his claim to the virgin prairie and because he knows this sign of Indian ("savage") occupation will reinforce the other settlers' unspoken fears of wilderness forces. He consciously dismisses the unease he feels: "This vast stretch of beautiful land was to be his—yes, *his*— and no ghost of a dead Indian would drive him away! . . . 'Good God!' he panted. 'This kingdom is going to be *mine*!'" (35). To assure his ownership, he makes a fifty-two-mile journey to file on his claim (36). This incident is a good example of the process of visualizing a landscape. Per Hansa negates the presence of a human past on his claim because it is not congruent with his own interpretation of the landscape as free of other human stories. To realize the landscape in his imagination, he must be the first resident.

Beret's resistance to the prairie landscape determines her response to the same circumstance. When her children bring her arrow-

heads, Beret intuits the presence of a human past, and when they show their mother the barely visible Indian grave, it underscores the "unspeakable loneliness" of the place where another human lies forgotten (39-40). To Beret, the grave is a relict structure, a sign of historical but unfamiliar human habitation: it provides no bond with place.

The other threat to first settlement is a more immediate one. Homestead claims are defined by property boundaries: stakes mark the corners and make real the paper claim on file in the land office. On a walk across their fields, Per Hansa finds a stake hidden in the grass (112). Though it should mark Tønseten's corner, the name on the stake is O'Hara. Another is marked Joe Gill. That another human could claim the Norwegians' land is unimaginable: the stakes must be the work of some dark force. Rølvaag explains in a footnote that in Norway, "a more heinous crime than meddling with other people's landmarks could hardly be imagined. In fact, the crime was so dark that a special punishment after death was meted out to it" (120-21). Norwegian folk belief held that someone who stole land by moving boundary markers would be a homeless wanderer after death.<sup>21</sup> Had Per Hansa been familiar with American law, he would have known that stakes alone are not sufficient proof of ownership: the Norwegians' legal filings supersede the unregistered markers. However, Per Hansa is referencing Norwegian custom: when he pulls up the stake that he believes disenfranchises his friend and neighbor Hans Olsa, his act is a direct challenge to the trolls, the dark forces in the earth that even he believes are working against the founding of their community. Beret, already acutely aware of these malevolent forces, recognizes in her husband's behavior "something . . . at last which he had to conceal from her" (117). When she finds the stakes hidden in the stable, she puzzles over the strange names ("Indians!") but knows that they are landmarks that have been standing in the ground. What has been for Per Hansa an act of courage to preserve

their small community becomes for Beret an act of sinful defiance.

Per Hansa puts the preservation of place over adherence to Old World beliefs. Instinctively, he knows that in America, he who occupies and transforms the land has the legal right to it, and he who works the land is rewarded. Beret, who resists knowing anything about American law or custom, views her husband's acts in Old World terms. In her cultural context, land was owned by wealthy men who established hard rules on trespassing. Beret, grounded in this peasant mentality, cannot approve her husband's New World act of defiance. When Beret tries to articulate her fears of the empty, haunted land, Per Hansa assures her that soon there will be more people. Although he acknowledges the fact that "she [is] too fine-grained" for the tasks of home founding, he believes that he can be her capable protector (44). This incident remains a point of deep if unspoken division and—on Beret's part—distrust between them.

Although Rølvaag's context is Norwegian folklore, this incident can also be read as a metaphor for the Indians' prior claim to Per Hansa's "place" and, by implication, the importance of place, not time, as the central metaphor in history. That is, all history in a place exists in the continuous present. In this context, Per Hansa's obsessive determination to impose the American idea of progress on a place with a past he chooses to disregard is, it could be argued, the root cause of his tragic death. Ignoring the Indian and Irish prior claims, Per Hansa conceives his role in terms of empire building, a kind of hubris that results in a tragic chain of events and culminates in the death of the usurper. Even before he begins construction of their crude sod hut, he envisions his fairy kingdom:

When, long ago, Per Hansa had had his first vision of the house, it had been painted white, with green cornices; and these colors had belonged to it in his mind ever since. But the stable, the barn, and all the rest of



the outhouses should be painted red, with white cornices—for that gave such a fine effect! . . . Oh yes, that Beret-girl of his should certainly have a royal mansion for her self and her little princess! (44-45)

Clearly, Per Hansa imagines the farm buildings of a prosperous Norwegian landowner on the Plains. This Old World vision of prosperity is a symbolic overlay that he identifies as *his* place even before he establishes any physical evidence of his “kingdom” on the Great Plains.

#### SOD AND SOUL

The tiny sod huts of the Norwegian community are the first signs of the Norwegians’ imposition of their will on the physical landscape. The psychological implications of such an act are an important factor in Rølvaag’s novel. As Edward Casey points out in *Getting Back into Place*, a building “exists between the bodies of those who inhabit or use it and the landscape around it. . . . Within the ambience of a building, a landscape becomes articulate and begins to speak in emblematic ways” (32). For Beret, the low sod structure is merely an extension of the earth itself. Where Per Hansa’s envious neighbors see their friends’ innovation in building a dwelling large enough for both his family and his animals (with a sod wall between them), Beret sees their degradation: in a house shared with animals, they become animals themselves. Buildings articulate the relationship between body and landscape. Here, even as her family and neighbors begin the process of getting into place, Beret remains *displaced*, unable to acknowledge an earthen structure as either an emblematic or definitive home. Per Hansa’s sod structure is twice the size of the other settlers’ dwellings and it confounds his neighbors, who are not aware of the magnitude of his envisioned empire. To them it seems a sort of witchcraft must be at work. The house shoots up like “an enormous mushroom” (48). Not only does he

have a structure big enough to house both family and animals, but he has plowed his first fields as he collected the sod squares for building, so that on Per Hansa’s “estate” there is house, barn, and seeded field before the others have thatched their houses.<sup>22</sup>

Per Hansa’s innovations puzzle his fellow Norwegians who defer to the building practices they knew in Norway (51-53). Per Hansa, however, combines his observation of their new environment—sod that comes out of the ground in clean-cut building blocks—with ideas he imagines during a trip to Sioux Falls. Rølvaag or his character might have observed similar sod structures on a journey across Dakota Territory through country where other settlers were using techniques familiar to their European origins.<sup>23</sup> For Per Hansa, form follows function: even though he envisions an elaborate cluster of farm buildings, his kingdom begins with materials at hand: the very ground itself, “a sort of make-shift” that saves time and labor and is warmer for animals and humans being housed under one roof (53).

*Giants in the Earth* provides a classic account of the process of creating place in the frontier landscape. Within a square space defined by a surveyor’s grid, Per Hansa sets about creating a permanent place. His effort illustrates John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s description of an inhabited landscape. In a natural space, a landscape evolves into an inhabited place.<sup>24</sup> There is incessant adaptation: the Indian is removed, leaving only a grave behind. The grave and its implied landscape of tipis and buffalo are dismissed by Per Hansa. The Irishman’s boundary stakes are erased from the landscape. His vision of the landscape does not include other European inhabitants. For him, the inhabited landscape includes more practical requirements: good soil, access to water, a homesite for his shining fairy castle and other inhabitants—Norwegians, of course.

The frontier, the liminal space they inhabit, is a region of choices where Per Hansa can realize his own vision of America’s manifest destiny—the ownership of land, denied to him

in Norway by both economics and social class. His imagined kingdom is not an idle dream but a very real possibility that he believes he can build in very real space. The task takes all of his attention, and he deliberately marginalizes himself from his family: "[D]own beneath [his outward buoyant recklessness] lay a stern determination of purpose, a driving force so strong that [Beret] shrank from the least contact with it" (41).

Another factor in Per Hansa's determination to acquire land and create a place of his own imagining mirrors Rølvaag's own life. To Rølvaag and his character Per Hansa, the impulse to emigrate is deeply rooted in Norwegian society. In Norway, Per Hansa does not have even a tenuous claim to land: Rølvaag makes him a fisherman, as Rølvaag himself was. Although fishing plays a major role in Norway's economy, it is by definition a perilous life at best, disconnected from any place other than a movable and fragile boat. Rølvaag himself emigrated from Norway despite an opportunity to have his own fishing boat. Although the sea was an integral part of his life, at nineteen he declined the offer and determined to immigrate to America.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, strict laws of landholding meant that the idea of a fisherman owning land was radical: no wonder Per Hansa feels a kind of exuberant release, a freedom to dream even fairy castles into existence. "No worn-out, thin-shanked, pot-bellied king is going to come around and tell me what I have to do with my kingdom'" (43). In his own mind, Per Hansa has created a *habitat*<sup>26</sup> where he can accumulate routines and customs and adapt a new land to become his family's place, a hybridized culture rooted in land.

Beret cannot share her husband's enthusiasm for the crude hut he has built. As Yi-Fu Tuan has pointed out, raw nature is intolerable: houses allow escape from nature, the natural environment that is full of uncertainties and threats.<sup>27</sup> Per Hansa's structure might be practical and warm, with the animal's heat to add to their own, but Beret cannot imagine living under the same roof with animals (53).

A house made from the earth provides no protection from the sinister forces that Beret senses threaten her very identity. Built places are intended to stave off chaos, to create a safe, enclosed place. As Edward Casey states in *Getting Back into Place*, buildings serve as "the mediatrix between artless earth, . . . a middle ground between nature and culture."<sup>28</sup> Even after they occupy their sod house, Beret feels she is in the wilderness. Casey points out that a building must be constructed well enough to be habitable: it must have permanency and "felt familiarity." (114) There must be an inside and an outside (122). Their rough sod house exhibits none of these features for Beret. The only comfort she comes to feel is in the closeness and warmth of the domestic animals, familiar reminders of her farm life in Norway. Their presence and the steamer trunk are the only "places" that evoke memories of the place she still identifies as home.

#### RESISTANCE AND SEPARATION

To be an integral part of the place her husband is creating, the farm taking shape in the fields gradually emerging from the prairie sod, Beret must come to identify home with the structures and things in place around her. Beret actively resists this implacement, remaining unresponsive to the culture of the developing community that is absorbing her husband and children, leaving her isolated psychologically and socially. Rølvaag dramatizes Beret's displacement in several vivid scenes. One is her sense of desolation at their discovery of the Indian grave and her bond of sympathy with the soul buried in this desolate place. At another point, when Beret is left alone, she imagines their fragile dwelling surrounded by a magic circle, a fairy ring derived from Norwegian folklore, erected by the dark forces in the earth. Because no other wagons have arrived at the settlement, she is convinced a barrier keeps them away. "She had even seen the intangible barrier with her own eyes . . . had seen it clearly . . . had had to force herself to step across it." (56).<sup>30</sup> Rescue, she

believes, is impossible: no one can cross this magic ring. The enchanted circle entraps her, ironically, in the sod hut's tiny enclosure amid infinite space.

Beret's conviction that evil forces are working against them deepens when a Norwegian family appears searching for the grave of their child buried someplace they cannot find.<sup>31</sup> The mother is insane with grief and must be tied down in the wagon. Soon after the family's departure, Beret sees a horrifying image in the clouds: a monstrous, leering face that threatens to engulf the land itself. It is a hideous geomorphism: "The eyes—deep, dark caves in the cloud—were closed. The mouth, if it were open, would be a yawning abyss. The chin rested on the prairie . . . Black and lean the whole face, but of such gigantic, menacing proportions!" (321). Schultz points out that this apparition resembles a Norwegian *draug*, a living dead person whose appearance portends disaster (102). That no one else sees it only exacerbates Beret's terror and deepens her conviction that they must escape. The locust plague that soon descends upon them confirms her fear.

Since physical escape is not possible, Beret retreats into deep depression. She discourages the efforts of the other women to include her in community activities. Where the others embrace American language and culture, Beret acknowledges no familiar patterns that can alleviate her sense of social and psychic isolation. She has no affective language to articulate the reality she sees, no familiar words to name the apparently empty space that bears no resemblance to the Norwegian landscape she knows experientially and psychologically. Because the other immigrants do not put as much stock in the Old World folklore, they fail to understand that she believes malevolent forces entrap her, and they misunderstand her periods of silent sadness. Finally, they avoid her company, thereby confirming her marginal status.<sup>32</sup>

Beret's radical resistance sets her apart from the little community. But despite the fact that the Spring Creek Norwegians have established

a tentative community on the Great Plains, like Beret they persist in regarding events from a Norwegian perspective, still their most familiar cultural context. When their cows disappear, they remember half-forgotten tales about cows spirited away by gnomes or trolls. When Per Hansa offers to go in search of the animals, the others' imaginings become a kind of validation for Beret. "Perhaps then, it was an act of Providence that the cattle had been lost. . . . It ought to show them how things stood out here" (98). Her fear may seem unreasonable, but again Beret is referencing Norwegian folklore: the gnomes are not the humorous garden variety but are hidden folk who punish humans by stealing their cattle.<sup>33</sup> While the others seem to regard this as merely one possibility, the encounter confirms once more Beret's conviction that "man could not exist in this savage, desolate wilderness" (98).

In her persistent resistance to the Plains' geographical space, Beret constructs a kind of negative sacred space around her. She interprets the Indian burial mound, the enclosing fairy ring, the destroyed stakes, and the threatening *draug* as signs of sacrilege. She assigns to these unfamiliar experiences meanings derived from another cultural landscape. In a place with no recognizable relict structures, no historical or identifiable religious tradition, Beret, who is unfamiliar with America's laws and customs, is incapable of creating new, positive referents.<sup>34</sup> As Edward Casey puts it, when one moves among places, one is acutely aware of not having an identifiable place to *be*. Beret remains in this liminal state between destinations and therefore "someplace else" than home. Even though, in the later volumes of Rølvaag's trilogy, Beret becomes resigned to the encroaching American culture, she never fully embraces it as her children, and especially Peder Victorious, do. She resists the settled state, refusing to admit to herself that their dwelling is, as Casey puts it, "somewhere in particular."<sup>35</sup>

Per Hansa is dimly aware that Beret does not share his expansive vision. He whitewashes the interior of their sod house in an effort to



create a place clearly differentiated from the ground (169). At first Beret is pleased with the sod hut that "shone so brightly inside that it dazzled the eyes," but when the snows come, she regrets the interior reflection: "Her eyes were blinded wherever she looked" (193). In an all-white world, Beret cannot discern the boundaries between the relative safety of their house and the undefined landscape that surrounds them. Without evident physical markers, Beret feels as if she herself has been erased from the landscape. With the passage of time, this liminality becomes more psychological than physical. As Christmas approaches, she prepares for her own death, convinced that she cannot survive childbirth. Her obvious depression distances their family even more from the other Norwegians who feel uncomfortable under her critical gaze. With little to do out of doors, Per Hansa becomes acutely aware of his wife's depression, but he cannot penetrate the "enchanted ring that [lies] about her" (204) or muster the resources of his imagination to coax Beret from her silent resistance. He cannot, in other words, fully understand her displacement since he is so utterly implied.

The roots of Beret's psychological displacement run deep. Guilt is a part of the cultural baggage she brings with her and is an important element in her persistent resistance to implantation. She believes that they have been enticed to the "trackless plains" by an American myth: Per Hansa is caught up in the American dream of westward expansion, but Beret regards his mythic vision as a delirium that has been visited upon him as retribution for their very personal sin: conceiving their first child out of wedlock (216). The fact that her parents, now separated by distance and time, opposed their marriage and warned her of Per Hansa, "a shiftless fellow" who drank and fought, deepens her sense of physical and psychic isolation. She even draws away from her husband, who has been to her "very life" (217). She empties the immigrant chest to prepare it as a coffin (223). The boundaries of her world constrict to enclose dead space, a dark, airless

steamer trunk, her link to the Old World that she deliberately abandoned to follow Per Hansa.

Beret's release from anticipation of death is ironic. Peder Victorious is born on Christmas Day.<sup>36</sup> The birth is long and hard, and in the most difficult time, she reveals the cause of her depression and isolation to her husband, demanding that he give their daughter to the childless Kjersti and "take the boys with you—and go away from here!" (227). Humans, she tells him, cannot exist here: they turn into beasts. He must go back to Norway (228). Per Hansa, frightened by her outburst, addresses the forces he believes are at work: "'Satan—now you shall leave her alone!'" (228). His exorcism and Beret's own unsuspected strength effect a change that becomes apparent when she awakes from her long sleep after the ordeal. For Beret, the birth of her son is the first weak link in the chain of events that finally allows her to acknowledge her place, however marginal, in the cultural landscape being created by other settlers in the geographic space of the Great Plains.

#### THE EDGE OF COMMUNITY

In book 2 of *Giants in the Earth*, Rølvaag focuses on the community's survival. The process of becoming *implaced* involves coming to terms with an unfamiliar climate and culture. The primary challenge is no longer Old World gnomes and trolls, stakes, or signs of the Indians' presence, but very real storms and plagues that threaten the entire community's survival. At first, these incidents seem to confirm Per Hansa's role as the community's invincible leader. In midwinter, on a trip to the Sioux River for desperately needed wood, the men are engulfed in a sudden and furious blizzard (259). Separated from the rest of the party, Per Hansa faces the storm with no shelter and only his oxen to aid him in his struggle to stay alive and on course. Like Beret, Per Hansa expects to lose the battle against these forces. This passage (260-62) is couched in the terminology of boats and fishing, reflecting once

again the experiences of Rølvaag and his character Per Hansa in the Lofoten Islands off northern Norway. The imagery evokes a contest on a frozen boundless ocean—the ultimate undifferentiated environment.

But the fisherman Per Hansa does not surrender control over his own destiny to sin or fate or natural forces. Like the Norwegian “Ash Boy,” he perseveres and survives when his oxen carry him to the very house where the rest of the party is safely out of the storm (266-67). Safe and warm, he dreams of a “sod house beset by the western storms. . . [ . . . ] A woman was moving about there whose sad face was still full of beauty; she carried a child in her arms” (270). This vision of Beret in the cold hut signifies the fact that they still inhabit very different places in the community: Per Hansa safe with the other men, Beret alone on the cold edge of their settlement.

Another incident underscores the capricious nature of the forces aligned against the settlers. A plague of locusts descends on their fields, a dark cloud roaring like a “heavy undertow rolling into caverns in a mountain side” (331). When Per Hansa returns home at dusk after a futile but heroic battle to beat back the invasion, there is no sign of life. The door is blocked by the steamer trunk so that he must force his way in. What he finds inside the house terrifies Per Hansa. In the steamer trunk is “Beret, huddled up and holding the baby in her arms; And-Ongen was crouching at her feet” (336-38). Beret is hysterical. His wife’s attempt to escape from the savage forces by entombing herself and her children in the constricting, suffocating trunk reveals the depth of her antipathy toward their prairie home. Per Hansa senses the diminished measure of his fairy kingdom—and their community—if Beret cannot be a full participant. The trunk symbolizes a barricade that separates Beret from her husband, who must use all his strength and will to reach her. It is Beret’s ultimate enclosure, a box within a box, that signifies both the stifling restrictions of her allegiance to the Old World and refuge from a place she cannot acknowledge as home. She is, quite

literally, placeless.<sup>37</sup> Even Per Hansa cannot dismiss altogether his deep-seated belief in the malevolence of nature, the power of wilderness chaos to resist human incursion and order.

When a Norwegian minister arrives, Beret at first resists his assurance of their place in the Great Plains. She cannot imagine God’s presence in a landscape she continues to regard as the venue of evil forces. When the minister prepares to baptize Peder with the middle name Victorious, her silent resistance erupts: “‘This sin shall not happen! How can a man be *victorious* out here, where the evil one gets us all! . . . Are you all stark mad?’” (368). But the minister’s act dispels Beret’s fear that the name is blasphemous. Beret’s tentative integration into the community is further aided by the minister when he offers a prayer of blessing for their home. The structure that has seemed an undistinguished part of the land begins to take on identity as a place defined by human intentions and experiences. When the minister celebrates communion, he uses the immigrant chest as the altar, thereby connecting her link to the Old World with their Plains home. The visit of the minister calms Beret, but her mood is deceptive: she is, in fact, in a deep psychological depression. The minister’s words have not brought her the assurance she needs to fully accept Dakota Territory and her sod house as home. In her mind and even out loud, she converses with her dead mother: existentially, she remains *displaced*.

But then Beret overhears Per Hansa’s confession of his part in her suffering to his friend Hans Olsa. His acknowledgment of sympathy and his insistence that she is “‘a better soul than I’ve ever met’” (405) provide a point of reference for the emotional grounding Beret needs. “‘It’s my own fault,’” he tells his friend. “‘I should not have coaxed and persuaded her to come with me out here’” (404). After she hears this confession, Beret falls into a deep sleep and when she awakes, she can, for the first time, see the landscape intentionally, identifying landmarks and boundaries and

acknowledging the community's shared experiences:

Everything looked so strange in here today! [. . .] It seemed to her that she hadn't been here for a long time. [. . .] It confused her dreadfully to stand here like a stranger in her own house. [. . .] Beret went searching about in her own home like a housewife who had been away on a long visit and returns a partial stranger. But the feeling of home-coming filled her with such joy that she could only laugh at her bewilderment. (407-8).

As Leonard Lutwack points out, "Human will and imagination go the longest way in making places what they are for human beings, and the mood of a person has much to do with determining the quality of places he is in."<sup>38</sup> Now, as she consciously acknowledges her physical place, Beret can begin to come to terms with her psychological place on the Great Plains.

The Norwegian Rølvaag does not let the story end on this modest note of triumph. In the last chapter, entitled "The Great Plain Drinks the Blood of Christian Men and Is Satisfied," the ineradicable fact of human liminality is embodied in Per Hansa's last act. The community's most confident member, who survived a powerful storm and fought against locust plagues, goes into a blizzard because Hans Olsa and Beret believe that he, Hans Olsa, must have a minister. This common request, of no particular import in most situations, becomes a death sentence in the face of the storm. In countless stories of the Great Plains, the forces of nature symbolize the ancient, persistent demands of place. In this instance, Beret asks her husband to go outside the boundaries of their safe home, their created place, to do an errand in the wilderness storm that they all fear cannot be accomplished. This time, Per Hansa does not return.

The last chapter is emblematic of the history and literature of the Great Plains. Beret is

only the most extreme example of the Euro-American settlers who found it hard to accept and endure the demanding reality of the Great Plains as a place to establish home. The physical and psychological isolation and years of pestilence, famine, and disease take their toll. Some go mad. Others perish. The survivors learn to anticipate and endure storms, fire, plagues, and dull isolation.<sup>39</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Per Hansa and Beret move to the American frontier by conscious choice—Per Hansa because he envisions a fairy castle, a myth that fits nicely with his confidence in America's westering myths, and Beret because she chooses to be with Per Hansa. He sees himself as an invincible pioneer who plunges into the task of transforming the prairie into neat squares of profitable crops, but he comes to understand that the land itself makes demands; his fairy castle fades. He must acquiesce to real storms and crises, to economic reality and Beret's vulnerability. Beret, in contrast, attempts to maintain a tenuous connection to her familiar Old World culture, resisting the American society being created around her, but it is impossible to remain displaced forever. Tenuously, in large part through her Americanized child Peder Victorious, Beret comes to accept, however reluctantly, the place where she is—their home, the church, and the growing community.

Ironically, it is Beret who creates a place for her children in Rølvaag's subsequent novels, *Peder Victorious* (1929) and *Their Father's God* (1931). Although she never fully embraces the Great Plains society and she continues to suffer bouts of depression and isolation, Beret establishes a thriving farm, a showplace of imaginative management and innovation. Her inspiration comes in dreams of Per Hansa, but her own affection for animals and her respect for the forces in the land result in her ordered existence in a place that at first seemed a formless void. In these subsequent volumes, the



steamer trunk is no longer a coffin but merely a piece of furniture, a reminder from another time and place.

In *Giants in the Earth*, Rølvaag has created one of the most explicit accounts of the costs of the transformation of the Great Plains grasslands into cropland. The Indians' presence, signified by the vague outline of a hilltop grave, resonates with Beret, the embodiment of Old World resistance to the cultural, social, and physical demands of an unfamiliar landscape.

Rølvaag embodies Beret's resistance and Per Hansa's confidence in the constrictive image of a very real, tightly closed steamer trunk and an expansive vision of an imagined fairy castle. Per Hansa's vision defines for him their sod house and barn that, like Wallace Stevens's bell jar in Tennessee, redefines the landscape that surrounds it. Beret's steamer trunk, inside the house, transposes Per Hansa's concept of the landscape as home place into Beret's fearful sense of the land's power to, in turn, redefine *them*. The chapter titles "The Heart that Dared Not Let in the Sun" and "On the Border of Utter Darkness" reflect Rølvaag's sympathy with Beret, and his belief that immigration and transformation of land and people come at a cost. It is Beret who recognizes the challenge of the land itself and resists its demands to acquiesce to its power, and it is Per Hansa who faces the challenge and defies the land's resistance. Ultimately, Per Hansa and the thousands of other homesteaders prevail, but at a cost that Rølvaag understood perhaps more acutely than any other Great Plains writer.

#### NOTES

1. O. E. Rølvaag, *Giants in the Earth* (New York: Harper-Perennial, 1927). Subsequent page references to *Giants in the Earth* are given in parentheses in the text.

2. Paul Groth, "Taking Place: Toward the Regrounding of American Studies," in *Mapping American Culture*, ed. Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), 3-23.

3. Groth and other cultural geographers identify this human interaction with nature as the cul-

tural landscape. Built environment connotes the process involved in creating the identifiable human presence—dwellings—in the composite cultural landscape. The emphasis here is on vernacular architecture: structures built by individuals to meet their own physical and aesthetic requirements.

4. See Harold P. Simonson, *Prairies Within: The Tragic Trilogy of Ole Rølvaag* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), for a thorough analysis of the tragic consequences of the divisions between Per Hansa and Beret.

5. Turner presented his speech, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," at the 1893 meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago. He based his declaration that the frontier period had come to an end on the 1890 census that declared there was no more land available for settlement by Americans and Europeans.

6. See Casey's discussion of this shift in part 2, "From Place to Space," in *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 75-129. See also Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

7. Other scholars prominent in the development of place theory include Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (1976; reprint, London: Pion, 1980); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Escapism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place and Culture: Analeptic for Individuality and the World's Indifference" in *Mapping American Culture*, ed. Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), pp. 27-49; Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989); William Bevis, "Region, Power, Place," in *Reading the West: New Essays and the Literature of the American West*, ed. Michael Kowalewski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 21-43; D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

8. This displacement is evident, for example, in Mr. Shimerda in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (1918) and in Frank Shabata in her *O Pioneers!* (1913). Ma silently follows the peripatetic Pa in Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series (1932-41), and Roy Goodnough's wife, Ada, a character who most closely resembles Beret, shrinks and dies on the Plains in Kent Haruf's more recent novel, *The Tie That Binds* (1984).

9. Several scholars have noted the influence of Ibsen on Rølvaag's pessimistic point of view: that

success comes at a price, and the more success is desired, the greater the cost will be. See Simonson, *Prairies Within* (note 4 above), pp. 34-35, 46; Paul Reigstad, *Rølvaag: His Life and Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 33; April Schultz, "To Lose the Unspeakable: Folklore and Landscape in O. E. Rølvaag's *Giants in the Earth*," in *Mapping American Culture*, ed. Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), pp. 89-111 (p. 97).

10. Schultz, *ibid.*, p. 91.

11. The tension between the settlers' struggle to establish place and the indifference of their children, who abandon the ideal for the immediate, is a constant theme in Great Plains literature. It is evident, for example, in the works of Larry Woiwode, *Beyond the Bedroom Wall* (1975); Wright Morris, *The Home Place* (1948), *The World in the Attic* (1949), *Ceremony in Lone Tree* (1959); Bess Streeter Aldrich, *The Rim of the Prairie* (1925); and Douglas Unger, *Leaving the Land* (1984).

12. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (note 6 above), p. 151.

13. Meinig, introduction to *Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (note 7 above), pp. 3-5.

14. Meinig, *ibid.*, p. 6.

15. Rølvaag uses ellipses as a stylistic device. In quotes from *Giants in the Earth*, bracketed ellipses indicate omissions from the quoted text. All other ellipses are Rølvaag's.

16. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (note 7 above), p. 3. Relph creates a geographic continuum of place based on one's ability to differentiate place and space, from primitive awareness of the immediate through perceptive space, existential space, sacred space, and geographical space. For further discussion of the place of place in landscape and cultural geography, see Meinig, *Interpretations* (note 7 above), especially p. 5, 45-46; and Dolores Hayden, "Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space" in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 111-133.

17. Relph, *ibid.*, p. 10.

18. Catherine M. Howett, "Where the One-Eyed Man Is King: The Tyranny of Visual and Formalist Values in Evaluating Landscapes," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscape*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 85-98 (p. 86).

19. For a discussion of the distinction between *place* and the more complex term *cultural landscape*, see Hayden, "Urban Landscape" (note 16 above), p. 113.

20. Schultz and other scholars have pointed out the mythical element in Per Hansa's vision: the

similarity between Per Hansa and the familiar Norwegian folk figure Askeladd, or Ash Boy, a good-for-nothing who perseveres and succeeds where others fail (Schultz, "Folklore and Landscape" [note 9 above], pp. 97-98, 104). See also Reigstad, "Roots in the Homeland," in *Rølvaag* (note 9 above), especially pp. 3, 6, 8-9.

21. Schultz, *ibid.*, p. 103.

22. Many readers interpret Per Hansa's reluctance to share his ideas with the other settlers as a sign of pride or hubris, a manifestation of the tragic flaw that contributes to his death. For example, having heard the objections his neighbors express concerning his unusual building, Per Hansa thinks, "Now he would get ahead of both Hans Olsa and the Solum boys!" (54).

23. In the United States, farmers adopted one another's effective innovations, so that by the time the Great Plains was opened for settlement, such innovations would have been quite common, though unfamiliar to Rølvaag's relatively recent immigrants.

24. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (note 7 above). In this study, Jackson outlines his theory of place.

25. Reigstad, *Rølvaag* (note 9 above), pp. 5, 22-23.

26. *Habitat* is Jackson's term; see *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (note 7 above), p. 40.

27. Tuan, *Escapism* (note 7 above), p. xiii.

28. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (note 6 above), p. 112.

29. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (note 6 above), p. 114.

30. Schultz points out the origins of this belief in Norse mythology: that malevolent forces in the ground itself have created a ring that humans cannot cross (Schultz, "Folklore and Landscape" [note 9 above], p. 102).

31. See Schultz (*ibid.*) for a discussion of the implications of burial in unconsecrated ground in Norwegian folk culture (p. 102).

32. Evidence in the text indicates that in Beret Rølvaag created a character suffering from clinical depression. She exhibits most of the symptoms: persistent sadness and hopelessness; withdrawal from friends and family; irritability and agitation; indecision and lack of concentration; poor self-esteem and guilt; low energy; thoughts of suicide or death. See also *Giants*, pp. 174, 204.

33. Schultz, "Folklore and Landscape" (note 9 above), p. 103.

34. This "negative sacredness," which derives from Beret's resistance to American culture, especially in matters of language and religion, remains the central conflict in the following volumes of Rølvaag's trilogy. Rølvaag clearly sympathizes with

his character's effort to resist American materialism and the gospel of progress, and to maintain her own cultural identity.

35. Casey, *Getting Back* (note 6 above), p. 121.

36. The birth date and the name Per Hansa chooses underscore the biblical allusions that Rølvaag employs in his novel. Such a birth in exile and in midwinter is central to the nativity story in the New Testament and implicit in Genesis 12:1-4: "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing'" (RSV).

37. In *Peder Victorious* (1929; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982) and *Their Father's God* (1931; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), the immigrant trunk is an

integral part of Beret's home. Full of things of personal significance, it is one furnishing among many and a link to Beret's now-distant Norwegian past. It provides a point of stability in the increasingly complex American society.

38. Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 35.

39. For other representative stories of the debilitating effects in varying degrees of the isolation in the Great Plains landscape see, for example, Mr. Shimerda in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*, and her short stories "Eric Hermannson's Soul," "A Wagner Matinee," and "On the Divide." See also stories by William Allen White, "A Story of the Highlands" and "The Story of Aqua Pura" in his collection *The Real Issue* (1896), Hamlin Garland's story "A Day's Pleasure" in *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891), Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind* (1925), and, more recently, *The Tie That Binds* by Kent Haruf (1984).

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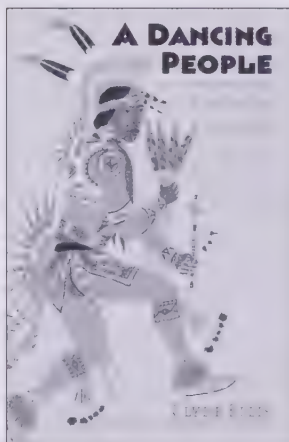
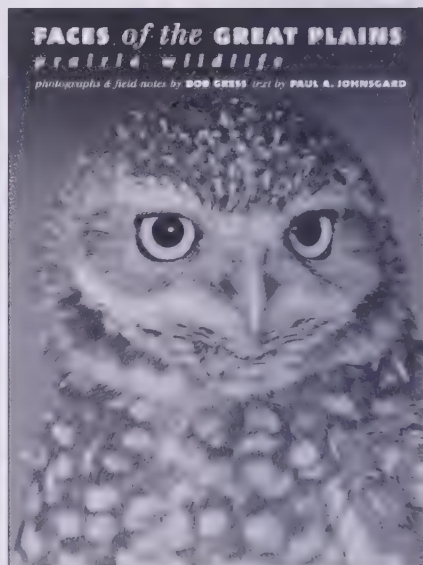
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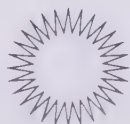
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Muskegowuck Athinuwick: Original People of the Great Swampy Land.* By Victor P. Lytwyn. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002. xiv + 289 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

In *Muskegowuck Athinuwick*, Victor Lytwyn provides a detailed study of the indigenous people of the Hudson Bay lowlands. At its core is the author's extensive historical research in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg; the academic context is the scholarly debate over the effects of the fur trade on indigenous peoples. As a historical geographer, Lytwyn brings an important spatial understanding to the Cree past, which is conveyed through the accompanying maps.

The first half of the book is the more methodologically diverse, as it examines pre-contact history, international relations (particularly the alliances with neighboring Cree and northern Ojibwa and the hostilities with Inuit, Chipewyan or Dene, and Iroquois or Haudonosaunee), and the resource use of the Swampy Cree. Synthesizing the archeological literature, Lytwyn outlines the longstanding scholarly resistance to (and only recent acceptance of) what Aboriginal oral traditions say: that people have been occupying the region for thousands of years. The final three chapters examine Cree involvement in the fur trade from the early seventeenth century until the emergence of the Hudson's Bay Company as the dominant non-Native interest in the region in 1821. At times this section reads more like a contribution to debates in fur trade scholarship than an interpretation of Aboriginal experiences. Lytwyn avoids simplistic explanations of fur trade dependence and culture change, seeing

instead the Cree becoming involved in a complex web of social and economic relationships with the Europeans in their midst.

In addition to the argument that the Cree retained a significant degree of control over their lives, several other themes emerge. First, the archival record clearly demonstrates that the northern "fur" trade was a multifaceted enterprise, as the Cree not only provided pelts, but also a wide range of products (notably geese, fish, and caribou meat) and services (including transportation). Second, as throughout the Americas, epidemic diseases took a deadly toll; populations rebounded, but the social effects were devastating. Finally, the lives of the Cree were intimately tied to the land and its resources. This is effectively portrayed in the book's most innovative chapter, organized around the seasonal cycles of the Cree year.

Like the book as a whole, the chapter illustrates the challenges facing those studying the Aboriginal past. *Muskegowuck Athinuwick* goes some distance towards incorporating Cree world views and perspectives, particularly in relation to the environment. This is largely accomplished, though, by consulting the writings of non-Aboriginal fur traders; Cree oral accounts tend to be relegated to explanatory footnotes. Lytwyn's Cree calendar, with its twelve months and four seasons, is based on fur trader Andrew Graham's observations; the Cree, however, continue to name the thirteen moons and six seasons. Such examples point to the need for scholars to re-examine the Aboriginal past to engage in further dialogue between the written accounts of non-Native observers and the knowledge of Aboriginal oral historians. Then books like *Muskegowuck*

*Athinuwick*, which provides a rich and much-needed resource on the Aboriginal history of the subarctic, would be even richer.

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*The Indian Frontier, 1763-1846.* By R. Douglas Hurt. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. xviii + 300 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Frontiers have dominated American historiography ever since Frederick Jackson Turner placed the term into the academic lexicon in the early twentieth century. Historians such as Bolton and Webb built entire careers around the ideology of the American western frontier, and the concept has grown exponentially since the mid-twentieth century.

Today's scholar can choose from a host of publications focused on geographical frontiers. The American South, the Appalachians, Spanish Borderlands, colonial America, Canada, even Alaska and Hawaii, have all been dissected under the frontier scalpel. But surprisingly few scholars have focused on Native American frontiers.

Dale Van Every broke ground in the early 1960s, followed by Ray Brandes in the 1970s. J. Norman Heard, who has yet to receive the recognition he deserves, has published a five-volume work on Indian-white frontiers, and June Namias pioneered a gendered examination of Indian captivities on American frontiers in 1993. But it is in relation to Robert M. Utley that the value of R. Douglas Hurt's *The Indian Frontier, 1763-1846* becomes most evident. Utley, the dean of Anglo-Indian relations, published his analysis of Indian frontiers of the American West from 1846-1890 in 1984. Hurt's book fills in the historiographical gap by featuring the Indian frontier during the preceding eighty years.

Hurt's sweeping work examines Indian-white relations from the perspective of British, Spanish, and American exploration, along with a brief acknowledgment of Russian activity in the American West. But it is his regional analysis that makes Hurt's work most significant. The American northeast, the southwest, the Pacific northwest, the trans-Appalachian region, the Mississippi Valley, and the Far West are all examined in terms of confrontation.

Great Plains scholars will appreciate Hurt's approach to the significance of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail on Indian-American relations. Under his pen, the impact of the intersection of the Mexican northern frontier, the American southwest, and the Osage, Kiowa, and Comanche homelands is laid bare. As a military history, Hurt's study proves the inefficacy of American Indian policy in the region.

By way of criticism, Hurt's history is primarily a man's history, with only an obligatory nod in the direction of Native American women, an oversight emphasizing the need for a thorough analysis of an Indian women's frontier.

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*America's Second Tongue: American Indian Education and the Ownership of English, 1860-1900.* By Ruth Spack. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. ix + 231 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.

Ruth Spack's thoroughly researched study of English education in Indian boarding schools goes beyond historical investigation. Spack shows how the methodology of teaching English imposed American ideologies in Native students. Then she closely examines the primary writings of Indian students and teachers who had learned English in the board-



ing school system. The result is a fine linguistic and cultural analysis of the complicated transitions from Native languages to the second language of the book's title, English.

Much has been written about the assimilative mission of boarding schools. Their purpose, as stated by Richard H. Pratt, was to "Kill the Indian; save the man." Spack considers how language played a role in that process of conquest: "Given that English functioned as a conduit of American institutions and laws, Americanization through English-language teaching was designed to end tribal sovereignty. Given that tribal sovereignty was tied to the land, Americanization signified a loss of territory."

Spack is sensitive to tribal identities and tribal voices. After discussing the pedagogy of English, she turns to the experiences of Indian teachers Lilah Denton Lindsey (Creek), Thomas Wildcat Alford (Absentee Shawnee), Sarah Winnemucca (Northern Paiute), and Luther Standing Bear (Lakota). She then draws on narratives from students Don Talayesva (Hopi), Charles Eastman (Dakota), and others. Her most intense scrutiny is reserved for the writings of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Sioux), as both a student and a teacher. Spack has excavated previously unpublished details about Bonnin's life, placing many of these details in tribal contexts. Spack's suggestion that Zitkala-Ša's memoir essays are more fictive than autobiographical, however, needs further consideration in regard to the construction of self in autobiography and the nature of tribal storytelling.

The brief epilogue looks beyond the limits set out in this study to discuss contemporary education and language issues. Students of the Great Plains, boarding schools, and American Indian literatures will find this volume engaging and persuasive through its lucid arguments, cogent writing, and new assessments.

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*Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874-1959.* By Richmond L. Clow. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2002. xii + 202 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$59.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

In the 1800s, the American Gold Rush shifted from California and Nevada to Colorado, and then to South Dakota. The search for gold, and the wealth and profits it brought, helped develop the American West. Richard Clow's *Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874-1959* tells the story of Black Hills gold mining in South Dakota. Drawn from successful mining ventures in California, Nevada, and Colorado, gold miners and investors hoped to strike it rich again in the Black Hills. But only by milling and extracting the gold trapped in tons of hard-rock ore could these companies and their investors make a profit. In *Chasing Glitter*, Clow portrays the struggle to extract Black Hills gold by examining the development of these milling operations.

The story of Black Hills milling involves the increasing need for large investment, costly and complex machinery, and scientific mining engineers. The gold was in the Black Hills, but the problem was how to extract it from low-grade ore. Because profit margins were always narrow, constant advances in gold-milling technology were required for companies to make a profit. Amalgamation, smelting, and cyanidation were the major milling techniques used for extraction. Clow traces the history of Black Hills milling through the development of increasingly sophisticated technology adapted to local conditions.

With the development of cyanidation in the 1890s, Black Hills gold mining boomed. Between 1895 and 1900, gold production doubled. In the early 1900s, the Homestake Mining Company in Lead, South Dakota, was the largest gold producer in the world. Just as California, Nevada, and Colorado gold mining operations helped develop new mining and milling technologies, so too did Black Hills gold mining.

Driven by the "chase for glitter," progress in milling technology helped make the Black Hills into a major gold mining region in the world. These old Black Hills mills, still dotting the South Dakota landscape, provide ample evidence of the importance of gold mining to the settling and development of the West and the Great Plains. Clow's *Chasing Glitter* helps bring these old mills to life, telling their story and the larger history of Black Hills gold mining.

CHRIS H. LEWIS

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*Father Francis M. Craft: Missionary to the Sioux.* By Thomas W. Foley. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xvi + 195 pp. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.

The bland title of this biography might not attract the many readers the book deserves since Craft's name is known only from occasional footnotes related to the Ghost Dance religion that ended with tragic bloodletting at Wounded Knee in 1890. Using the priest's journals and researching references contained within them, the author draws from obscurity a life that should inspire scholars to tap similar material repositied in Marquette University's Catholic Indian mission archives. Diaries and journals stored there are a treasure trove of ethnographic and historical information that still awaits baring. Biographers can use Foley's work as a standard to imitate.

Until this work, Craft appeared as a kind of itinerant Irish-Catholic priest who happened to be present (for unknown reasons) at Wounded Knee. He becomes substantially more complex as Foley shows he also bore the titles of soldier, physician, convert to Catholicism, and, of special significance, a priest of Mohawk descent. In the Jesuit Order for six years, Craft was later ordained for the Diocese of Omaha where he served as a "missionary to

the Sioux" of North and South Dakota. He was adopted by the family of Spotted Tail and spoke Lakota fluently.

Craft's later presence at Wounded Knee was to people among whom he once served as priest but who were now under military arrest. Unlike many later historians, Craft commended the soldiers for their restraint on this occasion. Were he to be fatally wounded, however, he asked to be buried with the Lakota who died there and were placed in a mass grave that now marks the site.

Foley reveals a late nineteenth-century world of religious sectarianism that influenced the actions of many who converged upon the American frontier. When not contending with Protestant government officials, Craft regularly confronted the hierarchy of his own Church who showed more interest in Katherine Drexel's well-funded evangelistic efforts than in his founding of a devout, but penniless, congregation of Lakota nuns. In the end, the veteran of five wars and missionary to several Lakota agencies found his much-deserved respite as a parish pastor in Pennsylvania.

Readers will not be sympathetic to the priest's Catholic opponents and non-Catholic detractors with whom he regularly skirmished. Unlike many who contended with Craft in his lifetime, they probably will identify with the hundreds who attended his funeral to mourn a heartfelt loss. So compelling is Foley's larger-than-life portrait that readers may wish to see it brought to the movie screen.

MICHAEL F. STELTENKAMP

Religious Studies Department  
Wheeling Jesuit University

*Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900-1948.* By Thomas R. Buecker. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 2002. xxviii + 214 pp. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.

Fort Robinson, located along the upper reaches of the White River in far northwest

Nebraska, enjoyed a long and eventful history. Founded in 1874 and not closed as a military base until 1948, the post played vital roles in the last wars with the Plains Indians: the so-called Sioux war of 1876-77 and the Ghost Dance "outbreak" of 1890-91. In the twentieth century it was a quartermaster remount depot for a time, and during World War II it served as a K-9 training base and a prisoner of war camp.

After 1948 the United States Department of Agriculture used the former military post as a research station, and then the place took on other uses. In 1972 the old fort became Nebraska state property and soon an historic and recreational park. Despite many changes, the well-preserved and carefully maintained site is a grand place to visit.

This study of Fort Robinson in the twentieth century is thorough, detailed, and encyclopedic. It contains chapters on the black regulars of the Tenth Cavalry, the post as a horse procurement and training center, the dog-training associated with World War II, the prisoners of war, and the evolution of the place as a park. It represents, in effect, volume two of the fort's history, for the nineteenth-century years are covered in an earlier study, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*.

Thomas R. Buecker, curator of the Fort Robinson Museum in Crawford, Nebraska, has provided a lot of information, perhaps more than most readers will want but scholars may find useful. The bibliography is likewise detailed and thorough. The maps are competently done, the photographs—all clear, sharp images—chosen well, and both add considerably to the quality of the book. The volume's great strength is its author's fine analysis of the connection and relationship between Fort Robinson and its soldiers and the nearby community of Crawford and its citizens and businesses.

The problems with the book relate to its composition and prose style. Heavy reliance on passive voice, for example, makes for a dull read, and poor transitions render the story

abrupt and jumpy. But, again, the book contains copious information.

PAUL H. CARLSON  
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Texas Tech University

*Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place*. Edited by Harry W. Fritz, Mary Murphy, and Robert R. Swartout Jr. Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2002. x + 375 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$19.95 paper.

*Montana Legacy* is a sequel to the well-received 1992 anthology, *The Montana Heritage*. Like its predecessor, this new collection offers sixteen republished essays arranged in roughly chronological order. And much like the articles in *Montana Heritage*, these new pieces either explore a little-studied aspect of Montana's past or offer a revised slant on a more familiar topic.

The two best revisionist essays are Colin G. Calloway's "Army Allies or Tribal Survival?" and David Emmons's "The Orange and Green in Montana." Calloway's reinterpretation of the 1876 military campaign leading to the Battle of the Little Big Horn examines the complex pattern of shifting alliances and enmities among the Plains tribes. Seen in this light, the alliance that the Crows, Shoshones, Arikaras, and a half-dozen other tribes made with the white invaders was more a "union of convenience" for people engaged in a struggle for survival. In reexamining Montana's infamous battle between copper kings Marcus Daly and William Andrews Clark, Emmons introduces the heretofore ignored elements of religion and ethnicity as key causes of the ongoing feud.

Essays by Robert Swartout Jr. and Laurie Mercier explore the experiences of two of Montana's less-studied minorities—Chinese and Mexicans. It is instructive to compare the experiences of the two groups. As Swartout points out, the Chinese, who arrived in Montana



during the 1860s gold rush, were overwhelmingly male. Although most labored either as miners or with railroad construction crews, they played central roles as businessmen in many Montana communities throughout the late nineteenth century. In contrast, the Mexicans, brought onto the Plains of eastern Montana by the Great Western Company to harvest sugar beets, arrived as family groups. In common, both groups performed the sort of back-breaking labor that whites shunned, and both had to cope with the often virulent racism of the European-American majority.

Other essays explore the plight of women, ranging from female bootleggers in Butte to women in rural Montana struggling to give birth to children without benefit of physicians or hospitals.

The relatively new field of ecological history also receives a nod. Mark David Spence's fascinating essay examines the peculiar view of the wilderness concept that led to the exclusion of the Blackfeet Indians from their mountain hunting grounds once the area became Glacier National Park. And Edwin Dobbs's piece, originally published in *Harper's*, explores the horrifying legacy of Montana's copper mining era that has endowed the state with America's largest superfund clean-up site.

The editors of *Montana Legacy* had a dual purpose: to gather a collection of supplementary readings for college classes in Montana history, and to produce a book appealing to a broader audience of readers. The pieces here are illuminating and entertaining enough to accomplish both goals.

DON SPRITZER  
Missoula Public Library

*"They Treated Us Just Like Indians": The Worlds of Bennett County, South Dakota.* By Paula L. Wagoner. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xiv + 155 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, references, index.. \$50.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

The land is at the core and "in charge" of the overlapping cultures of the Lakota and whites of Bennett County, South Dakota. The challenging Plains environment is a major element of personal and group identity, a force that "measures one's worth." In her ethnology derived from fieldwork in the county between 1993-1996 and in 2001, Paula Wagoner had expected to find sharp social contrasts between groups. As she discovered, residents had more in common than they might wish to admit.

Fear of loss of the land and the identity rooted to it are behind most tensions and disputes between whites and Indians and deeply connected to county history. Racial categories—fullblood Lakota, white, and mixed-blood—are the products of many social forces. In Bennett County mixedbloods are powerful due to their ability to maintain culturally flexible positions. Wagoner proposes that their power derives from collusions and interactions of people at the social margins who have an ability to access, identify with, and reinterpret symbols of the other groups.

She demonstrates this by using snapshots of daily life, especially moments of crisis where social categories come into play and groups must articulate their social identities. Homecoming events began with a protest march against use of Indian sports mascots, threatening to disrupt the homecoming coronation and bonfire. A weekend homecoming parade resolved tensions. The legal aftermath when a non-Indian rancher killed a Lakota man brought deep concern over issues of sovereignty and fairness peaked when outsiders threatened a boycott of local business. Tensions abated after a change of venue and the selection of a fair jury resulted in a conviction and long sentence. Wagoner's final snapshot is the Wild Horse Butte, followed by the combined Powwow Parade, Bennett County Fair, and Rodeo in which there could be distinct but unproblematic categories and a celebration of diversity in a small regional context.

Wagoner's volume is exquisite ethnology, providing insight into issues of racial interaction in a contemporary social setting that

usually is contextualized only in socioeconomic terms by those with social and political agendas. There is real understanding here. Living in South Dakota for more than two decades and sometimes working in the same area, I found reading her volume bringing back many memories, fond and otherwise, and a feeling that she truly knows Bennett County's people. In the end, she asks and answers the most pertinent question: "Will the prairie remain at the core of the community? Of course—she is its heart."

LARRY J. ZIMMERMAN

Department of Archaeology  
Minnesota Historical Society

*The Jesus Road: Kiowas, Christianity, and Indian Hymns.* By Luke Eric Lassiter, Clyde Ellis, and Ralph Kotay. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xii + 152 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index, compact disc. \$50.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Christianity, metaphorically referred to as the "Jesus road," came to the Kiowas of southwestern Oklahoma towards the end of the nineteenth century. Today, most Kiowas are at least nominally Christian, and, like other Oklahoma Indians, render prayers and hymns in their Native tongue in services that are otherwise Baptist, Methodist, or Pentecostal. In explaining why the Kiowas accepted Christianity and how Kiowa hymns still play a vital part in Kiowa community life, *The Jesus Road* contributes to a growing body of literature about Native American Christians who have not abandoned their personal and cultural identity. Anthropologist Luke Eric Lassiter, historian Clyde Ellis, and Ralph Kotay, a renowned Kiowa singer, collaborated to produce this short, albeit informative, book and companion CD of twenty-six Kiowa hymns sung by Kotay, accompanied by Pat Kopepasah and Letha Peters.

Harry Tofpi Sr.'s 1997 burial service in Saddle Mountain Cemetery—beautifully

nestled in the northeastern edge of the Wichita Mountains—opens part 1, Ellis's historical sketch delineating the arrival of Christianity in Kiowa country after the 1867 Medicine Lodge Treaty and how Kiowas converting to the "Jesus way" did so according to their own needs, without giving up their Kiowa identity. Largely based on the works of Isabel Crawford, founder of the Saddle Mountain Kiowa Indian Baptist Church in 1896, and secondary sources, Ellis narrates how other missions were established among the Kiowas in the late nineteenth century, though little attention is paid to the twentieth century, except through the ethnographic present.

Lassiter begins part 2 discussing the importance of Kiowa hymns, which are started by a song leader and performed without instrumental accompaniment for specific occasions; every song belongs to a family and has a story behind it, and, as Kotay nicely points out, Kiowa hymns—and other songs—are not "composed," but "come through the Spirit and the minds of people who really believe." Part 2 continues with Kotay explaining the personal, deeper meanings of the twenty-six songs on the companion CD. In the afterword, the three authors stress how preserving Kiowa hymns is instrumental to preserving the Kiowa language.

Having met Lassiter and Kotay on May 17, 1994, at one of Ralph's hymn classes, I can attest to their admirable dedication in preserving Kiowa language and culture through songs. One shortcoming of the book, however, is an inconsistent orthography for Kiowa terms and, moreover, the absence of phonetic transcriptions for the hymns. How can this book help maintain the songs and the Kiowa language when only English translations are provided?

BENJAMIN R. KRACHT

Native American Studies Program  
Northeastern State University

*The Light Crust Doughboys Are on the Air: Celebrating Seventy Years of Texas Music.* By John Mark Dempsey. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2002. ix + 294 pp. Photographs, appendixes, references, index, compact disc. \$29.95.

During the 1930s and 1940s radio played a huge role in the development and dissemination of American popular music, especially country music. Regular live exposure on the radio was often more important for a country music performer's career than were recording opportunities. And there is no better example of how the interaction of radio with recordings and public appearances helped to sustain a career than that of the Light Crust Doughboys. Of course it helps if you have a long-time sponsor, too.

The Light Crust Doughboys were formed in 1930 by the Burrus Mill and Elevator Company of Fort Worth, Texas, to promote the company's Light Crust Flour on radio. Original members included western swing pioneers Milton Brown and Bob Wills. W. Lee "Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" O'Daniel, general manager of the mill and a future governor of Texas, soon became the on-the-air announcer, and when the program moved to Fort Worth's clear-channel 50,000-watt WBAP, the popularity of the Light Crust Doughboys took off. Later over the Texas Quality Network the Doughboys could be heard not only in Texas but also on radio stations in bordering states and, perhaps most importantly for Midwestern listeners, on KOMA in Oklahoma City and KVOO in Tulsa.

By 1935 Brown, Wills, and O'Daniel had departed, but the Doughboys were flourishing. Marvin "Junior" (and later "Smokey") Montgomery joined up in 1935 and remained a member until his death in 2001. Others who left their mark include Dick "Bashful" Reinhart, Kenneth "Abner" Pitts, William Muryel "Zeke" Campbell, and John "Knocky" Parker. The daily radio show went off the air in 1952, but the Doughboys continued to tour and make personal appearances for Light Crust

Flour well into the 1980s. Since 1993 Art Greenhaw, who signed on as bassist and business manager, has steered the group in new directions: appearing with symphony orchestras and recording a series of Grammy Award-nominated albums with gospel music legend James Blackwood. The future of the Light Crust Doughboys now rests with the marketing acumen of Greenhaw.

To recount the Light Crust Doughboys story, John Mark Dempsey conducted a number of interviews with band members and associates past and present, combining these with additional interviews from the University of North Texas Oral History Collection to weave a narrative presented for the most part in the participants' own words. The author also discusses the Doughboys' recording career (although the 1933-1935 sessions cut for Vocalion are ignored). More detailed information on the band's studio recording history is available in the appendixes, and a "bonus" compact disc allows the listener to sample the Doughboys' varied repertoire (unfortunately no information on recording dates and musicians is provided). For critical perspective on the Doughboys' historical importance, Dempsey regularly turns to comments solicited from Texas music historians Kevin Coffey and John Morthland. The end result is a sprightly, if sometimes lightweight, chronicle that captures a sense of what has made the Light Crust Doughboys one of the longest-lived bands in country music history.

JOE W. SPECHT  
Jay-Rollins Library  
McMurry University

*Geometry in Architecture: Texas Buildings Yesterday and Today.* By Clovis Heimsath. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. xix + 158 pp. Photographs, line drawings. \$49.95.

*Geometry in Architecture* is really two books in one. The subtitle, *Texas Buildings Yesterday and Today*, provides the context for the theme



of a book that is fundamentally a pictorial essay covering selected architectural elements of early Texas buildings. The original book, written in 1968 and titled *Pioneer Texas Buildings: A Geometry Lesson*, was an essay in two parts. The written section provided Heimsath's personal observations on the state of architecture as he perceived it in 1968. As a critique of architectural design, his views, though caustic, had some degree of validity. His major criticism was his concern with the public's naivety and commercial brainwashing which had resulted in what he referred to as a "sham and aesthetic sin" with regard to domestic architecture. The book's second part was a pictorial essay of selected elements of early Texas buildings using a generalized base of geometry. Geometry as used in this context was not based on the branch of mathematics that deduces the properties of figures in space from their defining conditions, but rather on the architect's use of *space and form*.

Thirty-four years later a second revised edition of the book has been printed under the current title. This latest version attempts to bridge the gap of time with recent examples of current Texas buildings. While this would be a formidable task, the scope of the text dictates only a modest sampling of current architectural examples. Perhaps the greatest problem with this latest version is the identification of certain building types as examples done exclusively in the early Texas tradition, whereas other regions have an equally rich tradition of vernacular building.

The book's second part contains a pictorial selection of the built environment in Texas dealing with such architectural elements as porches, stairs, chimneys, steeples, materials, and barns. The photos are much more rewarding than the text; moreover, the diagrams accompanying them endeavor to illustrate a visual language. The strongest aspect of the book's photo-essay is its emphasis on visual literacy. By juxtaposing older photos with new buildings the author provides an introduction to architecture. The observer can then see first-hand fundamental relationships which con-

tinue to be used today. While the older photographs illustrate constructions done mostly by early settlers, the new photographs demonstrate what has transpired using similar techniques in today's world. The photos tend to confirm that new ideas and methodologies are not always an improvement over the simple and straightforward solutions of the past.

Finally, one of the real strengths of the book lies in the black-and-white photos of the old and new. While significantly powerful in themselves, it is unfortunate that they are not identified with location and designers' names.

ROBERT DUNCAN  
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*Laura Ingalls Wilder and the American Frontier: Five Perspectives*. Edited by Dwight M. Miller. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002. 121 pp. Notes, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper.

One of the most interesting literary figures of the twentieth century, Laura Ingalls Wilder, through her books about the American heartland, examines in many ways the heart of America. She questions the Euroamerican pioneer experience, the racial tensions of the contested West, and assumptions about gender roles. Even her relationship with her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, asks readers to reconsider the privileging of authorial autonomy; and, with respect to genre aesthetics, Wilder's mimesis of autobiography blurs the line between fact and fiction. *Laura Ingalls Wilder and the American Frontier: Five Perspectives*, a collection of essays that originated at the "Laura Ingalls Wilder and the American Frontier" conference hosted by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in 1998, touches on each of these issues. Ranging in depth and significance, the essays seem geared to readers coming for the first time to research and commentary on Wilder and will likely leave them desiring to know more.

Those familiar with the critical body of work on Wilder will recognize the names of John E. Miller, Ann Romines, and Anita Clair Fellman, who, as notable biographers and cultural critics, largely discuss how their previous research came into being. Romines considers Wilder's work in relation to consumer culture, and Fellman comments on how basal readers for primary and middle grade education have shaped the Wilder cultural legacy.

Elizabeth Jameson, whose work anchors the collection, offers a New West perspective that examines feminine roles in Western history as represented in Wilder's books, particularly as these roles contrast with Frederick Jackson Turner's male-gendered notions of the frontier. Jameson looks at Wilder's maturation process in the *Little House* series as the child moves toward an adolescent independence during her family's "inexorable migrations of Manifest Destiny" to a "secure homestead." Jameson contends that "If we really examined the 'feminine role' it would turn the frontier thesis outside in. It would shift our focus from the new nation to the family, with all its difficult legacies of intimacy, labor, interdependence, and endurance."

In addition, Ann Dahl offers a glimpse into the teaching of Wilder in grammar school, though I won't take issue here with Dahl's contention that readers enjoy characters who are "real people who lived in real places [sic]." And editor Dwight M. Miller offers in his afterword a brief but intriguing look at how the Laura Ingalls Wilder papers became a part of the Hoover Library collection.

The book concludes with an annotated list of suggestions for further reading and research that seems limited and somewhat dated (pre-1998). When I think about where I might find this collection, I see it on the shelves of the Hoover Library gift shop. The collection, with its arsenal of noted scholars using conversational address, seeks to bring Wilder to a wider audience and seems less concerned with advancing new scholarly approaches. To those who most likely grew up reading the *Little House* books, this collection's overviews rep-

resent a good starting point for Wilder studies. To those already in the cult, we might best send this book to friends and ask them to join us at the induction ceremony.

PHILIP HELDRICH  
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Emporia State University

*Grave Concerns, Trickster Turns: The Novels of Louis Owens.* By Chris LaLonde. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. xiii + 220 pp. Illustration, notes, works cited, index. \$34.95.

In the last paragraph of his last chapter, "Endgames," Chris LaLonde articulates an idea implied throughout his text: the fiction of Louis Owens is "trickster activism." This was indeed Owens's personal approach to changing how the world at large views American Indians, and how he felt the world at large (including American Indians) do (or should) view the environment in which they live. LaLonde earns high marks for this and many other lucid observations about the fiction of American Indian author and scholar Louis Owens (1948-2002), in the first book-length examination of Owens's five completed novels. "Language has the power to create a world," says LaLonde of one of Owens's beliefs. Owens used language deftly, but his novels are not easy to read when compared to much of popular literary fiction today. He often wrote in a manner to exclude the reader from the privileged center. *Grave Concerns* is an excellent companion to those novels for the reader who wishes to get to the heart of the matter.

Each chapter of this volume, number 43 in the American Indian Literature and Critical Studies series from the University of Oklahoma Press, addresses an individual novel and therefore can only cover so much of Owens's clear yet deceptively sophisticated style. LaLonde demonstrates his own wide reading and careful thought as he illustrates precisely how Owens was doing what he was doing with

words. Influenced by many American Indian novelists, Owens often alluded to other authors' ideas and put his own environmental Choctaw-Cherokee spin on them. His literary references were frequent and subtle, but readers who did not notice them never came up short, wondering what had just happened. LaLonde has carefully teased out and illustrated some of these storytelling transactions, most particularly focusing on Owens's references to (and appropriation of) a wide range of canonical American literature, thus celebrating Owens's reinvention of the canon for his own ends. Owens also used family stories in his novels; his mother, Ida Brown Owens, a Cherokee mixedblood from Oklahoma, told him stories he incorporated in *Nightland*, lending a Great Plains connection to his oeuvre.

LaLonde tracked down and provided photographs of several places referenced in the novels. One set of geographic errors did creep into the book, by way of his use of a portion of an essay about *Wolfsong*. Lee Schweninger incorrectly attributed some of the novel's action to the wrong tribe and river, and LaLonde has repeated this. Owens admitted to twisting the map a bit himself, but not in this manner. But, all things considered, *Grave Concerns, Trickster Turns* provides a fine foundation for the study of the literary bricolage of Louis Owens.

MARGARET DWYER

University of Texas at Arlington Libraries

*Red Matters: Native American Studies.* By Arnold Krupat. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002. xiv + 167 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$47.50 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

A reviewer of *Red Matters* might reasonably expect a work with the post-colon title *Native American Studies* to foreground Native intellectual voices or the voices of Native and non-Native scholars who work in the field and publish in the field's journals and to privilege indigenous critical perspectives. The reviewer

might have some apprehension, however, that Krupat would say he or she was provincial or a "back to the blanket" scholar. The title, nevertheless, is part of a broad deception, for though red matters in *Red Matters*, non-indigenous critical perspectives and Western and non-Native intellectual, cultural, and historical traditions matter more. In his demonstration of the cosmopolitan critic's "worldliness" and his "expertise in the translation of Other knowledges," there is in the work a persistent critical turn away from intellectuals and scholars in the field of Native Studies who rely on indigenous critical perspectives grounded in specific tribal, cultural, historical, and literary contexts.

Though Native Studies might not be the only field in which a scholar can implicitly claim that study in *other* fields will provide the most enlightened insights, the transgression is particularly egregious when non-Natives and scholars who privilege Western or non-Native critical perspectives already dominate the field. *Red Matters* reinforces exclusive academic standards for what constitutes valid intellectual and critical work, and the cosmopolitan critic affirms the colonial privilege of telling "the natives" that he knows what is valuable, important, and relevant about their cultural productions. In addition, the critical foundation of *Red Matters* rests on an intellectual civilization and savagism binary. The cosmopolitan critic is worldly, sophisticated, rational, an expert in many fields, and a friend of the Indian. He functions as a "well-organized bricoleur," while Native writers struggle to communicate: Vizenor does not define his terms clearly; Cook-Lynn is "badly confused"; Alexie ends some of his stories, Krupat notes in a chapter on Indian rage, in "infuriatingly ambiguous and unsatisfying" ways; and Womack is, apparently, incapable of matching Krupat's cosmopolitan sophistication.

*Red Matters* is not a work of Native American Studies, but a work of Cosmopolitan Studies or what we might call Compassionate Colonialism in an intellectual, critical, and academic sense. Therefore, while the book



might make red matter in postcolonial, borderlands, or subaltern studies, for many scholars in Native Studies who do not need someone telling them in 2003 that red matters, *Red Matters* likely won't matter much.

JAMES H. COX  
Department of English  
University of Texas at Austin

*Growing Up with the Town: Family and Community on the Great Plains.* By Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002. xv + 198 pp. Photographs, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Dorothy Schwieder knows community history. As a historian at Iowa State University, she investigated a number of Iowa locations, especially that state's coal camps. In *Growing Up with the Town*, Schwieder takes a much more personal look at the community she grew up in, Presho, South Dakota. Her father arrived in Presho in 1909, just four years after the Milwaukee Railroad established the town, and Schwieder tells Presho's story through the activities of her family. She has two motives: first, "to preserve at least a part of a small town's experience in its first fifty years," and second, "to document the history of a family within that town." In reality, this is a labor of love. Schwieder is proud to have grown up in Presho; she adores her family; and she ties these sentiments together to create a community history.

This formulation is attractive, exploring a community through its most fundamental unit, a family, but Schwieder attempts to do more. For instance, she delves into environmental history. Presho sits on the eastern edge of the Great Plains, and Schwieder talks at some length about the Great Plains' influence, arguing that the difficult environment caused residents to develop a "mentality of the Plains," which incorporated "a pragmatism, a stoicism, and an extraordinary work ethic." But then Schwieder also delves into genealogy as she

explores the backgrounds of her grandparents in Ireland and Norway to find the values and attitudes that passed through the generations.

Schwieder's book is chronological, broken into two parts, depending on her sources. The material in the first, "The Early Years," comes from what she calls a "collective memory." The second starts in about 1938 and is titled "A Personal Perspective" because she is the primary source. The book is at its best when Schwieder discusses traumatic times on the Plains, the droughts and the Depression, especially as her father struggled to run an International Harvester equipment business, raise a large family, and persevere after the death of his first wife.

People interested in Great Plains communities, South Dakota history, and the early twentieth-century frontier experience will find this work of value. Yet it has shortcomings. A map of western South Dakota and of Presho would have helped. Also, Schwieder credits the Plains environment and her father for the work ethic of her family. This dual argument weakens her point about the Plains environment. (Her father would have worked hard no matter where he lived.) Finally, while her bringing in thoughts from a number of scholars adds a certain intellectual flavor, it detracts some from this loving account of Presho.

DAVID A. WOLFF  
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Black Hills State University

*When Montana and I Were Young: A Frontier Childhood.* By Margaret Bell. Edited and with an introduction by Mary Clearman Blew. Afterword by Lee Rostad. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xxx + 251 pp. Notes. \$30.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

"I might not have gone to school, but I had to solve more problems than most children," asserts Margaret Bell in *When Montana and I Were Young: A Frontier Childhood*. As the oldest child in a family of four girls with no mother

and a shiftless stepfather, Bell relates that she was often responsible for tasks not usually relegated to women—and especially not to children. In her childhood memoir, she describes pulling a yearling calf out of an iced-over spring by herself, developing an intricate system for managing ranch chores while her stepfather was away, and spending her days on the prairie searching for lost cattle. Most of these events occur during Bell's impoverished childhood on a homestead on the Canadian Plains, but the narrative begins and ends on the Plains of north-central Montana where Bell was born in 1888.

In the isolation of the Plains, one problem emerges that even the resourceful, young Peggy Bell cannot solve: throughout her childhood her stepfather physically and sexually abuses her. At one point, Bell tells of her desire to "put an end to my intolerable life" by attempting to kill herself with the same strychnine she used to poison coyotes on the ranch. Bell eventually gets away from her stepfather and returns to Montana as a teenager where she soon becomes noted for her ability to break horses. In her absence, though, the Montana prairies had evolved from "green, with tall grass waving like grain" to "a dirty gray, with no grass at all that I could see." The story ends when Bell is eighteen, and her childhood, along with Montana's youth, comes to an end.

As interesting as Bell's story is the history of its transformation from Bell's desire to "get her life story told" to its publication in the *Women in the West* series from the University of Nebraska Press. In her introduction to Bell's memoir, Mary Clearman Blew explains that the manuscript—first developed in 1947—went through several drafts, yet always avoided publication. Bell died in 1982. In the mid-1990s, Lee Rostad rescued a version of the manuscript from a box of papers in a friend's garage in Martinsdale, Montana. Rostad and Clearman Blew collaborated—with Clearman Blew's revisions and introduction and Rostad's afterword—to bring Bell's memoir to publication. The memoir is a consequential addition to Plains literature, providing a narrative that

brings to light the significance of being a child and female on the frontier Plains.

RANDI TANGLEN  
Park City, Montana

*When I Was a Young Man: A Memoir.* By Bob Kerrey. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2002. xi + 270 pp. Photographs. \$26.00 cloth, \$14.00 paper.

Bob Kerrey's memoir begins with a promise to his dying father to find out what happened to the father's brother, lost in the Philippines during WWII. This Kerrey did, but instead of writing his uncle's story, he wrote his own, of growing up in the 1950s in Lincoln, Nebraska, one of seven children in a solid, church-going, middle-class family. "We biked everywhere," Kerrey writes. "The edge of the universe lay at the ends of the dirt roads leading to those places where the wild and wooly frontier began." The fearful things in this safe place were either abstract (Soviet and Martian invasions) or very concrete (spring floods). In the plainest of plain prose, Kerrey records his high school ambitions (to defy his asthma and make the football team like his older brother) and his years at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where he majored in pharmacy. Although one of his college girlfriends joined the Freedom Riders in 1961, Kerrey confesses that he himself "knew or cared little about the world outside Lincoln." Looking back, he both loves his childhood and marvels at how fully he accepted its limitations. Yet a note of self-justification intrudes even when he is self-critical: he joined a fraternity with exclusionary membership clauses because he wanted to belong; but he credits the fraternity with giving him "a chance to lead" when he was elected its president. He does not ask himself whom he was leading nor toward what end.

In 1966, Kerrey received his draft notice and instead volunteered for the navy and its special forces unit, the SEALs. His attitude toward the war was passive: he could not

imagine refusing to serve but hoped it would end before he had to go. Kerrey's analysis of the war is brief, superficial, and contradictory. He knew little about the conflict when he volunteered and seems not to have learned a great deal since. He is content to believe that the US intervened in the war out of a desire to secure the "freedom and self-determination of the South Vietnamese," that in the delta, where he fought, people sympathized "with whomever they feared most," and that the North Vietnamese defeated the US because "we lost the battle for public opinion not only in the United States but also in South Vietnam's countryside." He does not explain why South Vietnamese opinion mattered, if fear alone determined people's sympathies.

One dark February night in 1969, Kerrey led his team into the delta village of Thanh Phong, which, the South Vietnamese district chief had assured him, contained no civilians since the entire village was loyal to the National Liberation Front. The goal was to kill or capture high level enemy officials supposedly meeting in the village. First, the inhabitants of a house on the outskirts of the village are killed for fear they would warn the others. Kerrey "did not have to give an order to begin the killing but I could have stopped it and didn't." He leaves out who lived in the house: two grandparents and five grandchildren. Next, the team searched several houses in the village, finding no meeting and no men. Meanwhile the women and children had gathered outside the houses, talking loudly. "We had two choices: withdraw or continue to search the houses in the dark." The choice was apparently made for them: a shot rang out and Kerrey's team responded with "a tremendous barrage of fire...." Here Kerrey hides behind the passive voice: "I saw women and children in front of us being hit and cut to pieces." At least one member of Kerrey's team has disputed this version of events, making Kerrey a direct agent in the killing of the family on the outskirts of the village and denying there had been hostile fire in the village. Kerrey himself claims not to remember exactly what hap-

pened. He does recall feeling "a sickness in my heart for what we had done." But his main concern, repeated several times, is that he had lost his innocence. Later, in the hospital recovering from wounds received in another operation (for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor), he grieved for "my lost innocence, which could never be re-attached to my spirit." Out of the hospital and back in Nebraska, he is haunted night and day by "the loss of my innocence and the death of innocents...." He comes close to suicide but rejects it out of a conviction that "I could give meaning to the lives of the people I saw in my dreams only by choosing life." How living his successful, if haunted, life might give meaning to the Vietnamese women and children he killed is left unexplored. Kerrey lost his innocence, but neither to himself nor to his countrymen does that make him guilty, nor even responsible for what was wrought in Vietnam.

What finally disappoints in this memoir is not Kerrey's failure to resolve the contradictions which multiply as one reads, but his unwillingness to confront them. Thus, at the Nixon Medal of Honor ceremony there was "something heroic," he writes, "about American men who were willing to travel to that strange country and fight for the freedom of people they did not know or understand." What freedom had to do with the deaths in Thanh Phong is anyone's guess.

When, decades later, Gregory Vistica reported the death of thirteen civilians at the hands of Kerrey's SEAL team, the reaction of the country was to feel sorry for Kerrey and for his lost innocence. As the Vietnam veteran and Massachusetts senator, John Kerry, argued, if you were going to judge Bob Kerrey, "you'd have to investigate the whole war" (quoted in Jonathan Schell, "Bob Kerrey's Vietnam," *The Nation*, May 8, 2001). That is a task neither the government nor Bob Kerrey has been ready to undertake.

MARILYN B. YOUNG  
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New York University



*The Snow Geese: A Story of Home.* By William Fiennes. New York: Random House, 2002. x + 253 pp. Map, references. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper..

William Fiennes is an Englishman who was struck by a serious illness in his twenty-fifth year. Following multiple surgeries, he required several months of convalescence, most of it occurring at his parents' home, from his earliest memories the stable touch point to his life. The remainder of this true story is built around themes of home, nostalgia for familiar surroundings, homesickness, and the quest that many organisms have to go home at critical junctures of their lives. The subtitle is more descriptive of the fascinating narrative that follows than is *The Snow Geese*.

During his extended recovery period Fiennes rediscovered a story about a snow goose that, by an accident of migration, ended up on the wrong side of the Atlantic Ocean. The story of that bird's annual departure in the spring from England and return in the fall triggered him to undertake an adventure on which he followed wild lesser snow geese for the full length of their spring migration from Texas to Canada's eastern Arctic—which he views as their home because they nest and raise their families there.

The journey starts in Eagle Lake, Texas, followed by extended stops at Sand Lake, South Dakota, the Portage Plains of southern Manitoba, Churchill, Manitoba, and finally Baffin Island in the Northwest Territories. His care in preparing for the trip is illustrated nicely by his accurate interpretation of many literature references on snow goose biology. For the specialist, no new insights about the geese are revealed. His descriptions of what the birds do, however, along with his appreciation of the unusual characters he meets and his unexpected and detailed observations of ordinary things, their form, and their utility, all combine to hold the reader in wonder of where his next flawless transition will lead. Most readers living along the route of the geese will recognize a lot in what he describes and be

fascinated by his views of the people, places, and things he touches.

This was a personal quest that Fiennes shares openly. Constantly drawn back to the people and places that surrounded him in his youth, he remains inextricably bound to those experiences. This reader sometimes felt like an intruder, learning about personal details that left a sense of lingering shadows preventing Fiennes from achieving his quest to reach and understand—home.

BRUCE D. J. BATT

Conservation, Ducks Unlimited, Memphis

*Breaking Clean.* By Judy Blunt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. xi + 303 pp. Map. \$24.00 cloth, \$13.00 paper.

"Few shared my place of origin or the events of my life, but many, it seems, shared my experience." In *Breaking Clean*, Judy Blunt's memoir of her life as a Montana rancher's daughter, and eventually as a Montana rancher's wife, she reminds us that storytelling mines the minute and the particular in order to unearth larger truths. In this memoir, those truths are about the cramped inarticulateness of women's lives and the paucity of real, vibrant choices, as well as the ranching community's support for its members during the inevitable crises that occur on the windswept Montana Plains.

Now a writer living in Missoula, Montana, Blunt traces her childhood, early adulthood and marriage, and eventually her chosen separation from the ranching community that both supported and restrained her. It is a lyrical book and, following the current trend of women's memoirs, blends rage and resignation, explanation and exultation, as it tracks the movements of her life. For example, when Blunt describes a harrowing run to the hospital with her ill child, she reckons directly with the sheer danger of an isolated ranch during a Montana winter. Fearing that the roads would prove impassable anyway, she and her husband postpone leaving until the child's fever

spikes so dramatically that there is no other alternative. True to the gender roles of the time, it is Blunt who finally must make the decision to try for the hospital. They do make it, and the nurse's incredulous "You're not taking her back out there?" is balanced by Blunt's offer of "my grandmother's evenhanded shrug, weighing the odds."

Although the title, *Breaking Clean*, suggests the clarity of a clean break, Blunt's memoir offers no such consolation. The "break" that enabled her to move, presumably "on," to a new life in Missoula is given the least attention in the text and thus seems conspicuously underexamined. The strengths of the book lie in Blunt's clear eyed-glance backward and her

ability to keep sentimentality at bay. The result is a memoir challenging the code of the West that deems women valuable as supporting players in the western drama only to the degree that they perform tirelessly and obediently; there are no relationships between husband and wife "partners" in this West. But the memoir also remembers fondly a community that watched carefully, ready to help, attuned to the need for support, during the dark night of snowy driving toward desperately needed medical care.

LINDA K. KARELL  
Department of English  
Montana State University

# NOTES AND NEWS

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2004 Plains Indian Seminar at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center will be held 30 September – 3 October 2004 in Cody, Wyoming. The conference will address the theme: *Enduring Expressions: Music and Dance of the Great Plains*. Suggested topics for presentations include: ethnohistories of particular song or dance traditions; origins and histories of celebrations involving music and dance, effects of missionaries and other historical influences on music and dance traditions, musical instruments used on the Plains, powwows and related arts and regalia, and the significance of music and dance as contemporary cultural expression for Plains Indian people. Presentations that address new areas of American Indian scholarship are encouraged. Historians, anthropologists, educators, art historians, dancers, and musicians are invited to submit a 250-word abstract along with a résumé by 1 February 2004. Scholars and educators from tribal colleges and communities are especially invited to participate. For more information contact: Lillian Turner, Public Programs Director, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY 82414-3428, 307/578-4028, <lilliant@bbhc.org>, <<http://www.bbhc.org/pis/speakers.cfm>>.

## WILLA CATHER LITERARY AWARD 2004

Women Writing the West (WWW), a non-profit association of professionals writing and promoting the Women's West, underwrites and presents the WILLA Literary Award. This national award honors the best in literature featuring women's stories set in the west published each year. The award is named in honor of Pulitzer Prize winner Willa Cather, one of the country's foremost novelists. The awards are presented at the WWW Fall Conference. Entries for the WILLA Literary Awards are open all persons worldwide and are not lim-

ited to WWW members or women specifically. All authors or publishers of books featuring women's stories set in the west in any time period may enter. Only books first published in 2003 are eligible. Entry Deadline is 1 February 2004. The application can be found at: <[http://www.womenwritingthewest.org/03\\_willa\\_app.html](http://www.womenwritingthewest.org/03_willa_app.html)>. For additional information, please contact Cindy Massey, by e-mail at [cmass22@aol.com](mailto:cmass22@aol.com), or by mail at 10547 Rocking M Trail, Helotes, TX 78023.

## 20TH NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

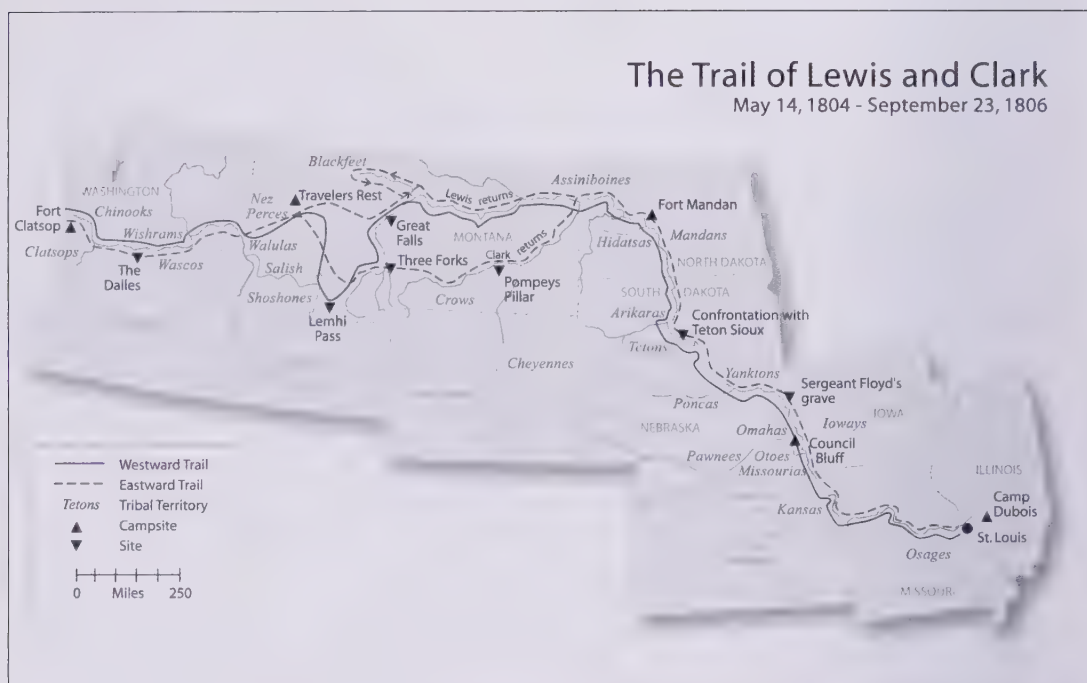
The Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada will host the 20th Anniversary of the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, 29-31 January 2004. Workshops and concerts are scheduled, as well as poetry sessions, open mike sessions, entertainment. For more information, contact: Western Folklife Center, 501 Railroad St., Elko, NV 89801, (888) 880-5885, <[tbaer@westernfolklife.org](mailto:tbaer@westernfolklife.org)>, <<http://www.westernfolklife.org>>.

## VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at the University of Oklahoma seeks applicants for its Visiting Scholars Program. The purpose of this program is to assist researchers by providing financial awards for on-campus work in the Center's archives. Awards are normally from \$500 to \$1000 to defray the cost of travel and lodging.

The Center's holdings include the papers of 55 former members of Congress, but topics cover more than just the history of that legislative body. Included in the Center's collections is information on government agriculture programs, flood control activities, water and soil conservation projects, federal-Native American relations, drought relief, and rural development and electrification. The states





Source: Gary E. Moulton. *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An American Epic of Discovery*. University of Nebraska Press, 2003.

best represented are Oklahoma and other western states, such as California, during the twentieth century. One collection covers Kansas during the nineteenth century. The Center's collections are described on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ou.edu/special/albertctr/archives/> and in the publication titled *A Guide to the Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives* (Norman, Okla.: The Carl Albert Center, 1995) by Judy Day et al., available at many U.S. academic libraries. Additional information can be obtained from the Center.

The Visiting Scholars Program is open to any applicant. Emphasis is given to those doing postdoctoral research in history, political science, and other fields. Graduate students involved in research for publication, thesis, or dissertation are encouraged to apply. Interested undergraduates and lay researchers are also invited to apply. The Center evaluates each research proposal based upon its merits, and funding for a variety of topics is expected.

No standardized application form is needed. Instead, a series of documents should be sent to the Center, including: (1) a description of

the research proposal in fewer than 1000 words; (2) a personal vita; (3) an explanation of how the Center's resources will assist the researcher; (4) a budget proposal; and (5) a letter of reference from an established scholar in the discipline attesting to the significance of the research. Applications are accepted at any time.

To obtain more information, please contact Archivist, Carl Albert Center, 630 Parrington Oval, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019. Telephone: (405) 325-5401. FAX: (405) 325-6419. E-mail: <kosmerick@ou.edu>.

#### MAP CORRECTION

We have reprinted a corrected version of the map that accompanied an article in the spring issue of *Great Plains Quarterly*, "Excerpts from *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An American Epic of Discovery*, *The Abridgment of the Definitive Nebraska Edition: The Journey across the Plains*," by Gary E. Moulton [*Great Plains Quarterly* Vol. 23 No. 2, p. 76. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused our readers.

## One Vast Winter Count

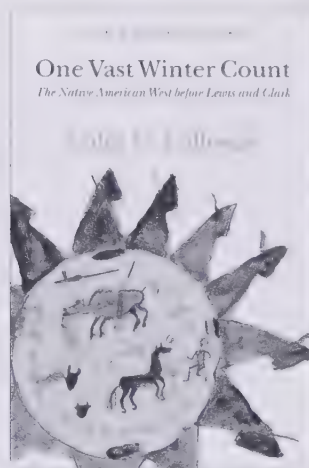
The Native American West before Lewis and Clark

By Colin G. Calloway

"Author of *First Peoples* and a distinguished Dartmouth historian, Calloway concentrates on the Indian experience from the Appalachians to the Pacific, in a time frame from prehistory to the 18th century. The scope is staggering, but Calloway masters it, demonstrating a remarkable command of a broad spectrum of historical, ethnographic and archaeological sources including printed material and oral traditions. . . . *One Vast Winter Count* is both a major work in its own right and a magnificent first volume in Nebraska's new History of the American West series."

—★*Publishers Weekly*

\$39.95 cloth | History of the American West series



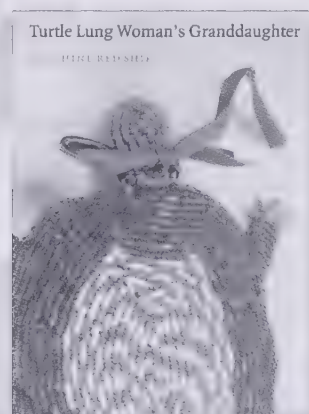
## Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains

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By Paul A. Johnsgard

*Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains* is an easy-to-use reference on the wildlife that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark encountered during their 1804–6 Corps of Discovery expedition.

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## American Indian Stories

By Zitkala-Sa

With a new introduction by Susan Rose Dominguez

*American Indian Stories*, first published in 1921, is a collection of childhood stories, allegorical fiction, and an essay. One of the most famous Sioux writers and activists of the modern era, Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin) recalled legends and tales from oral tradition and used experiences from her life and community to educate others about the Yankton Sioux.

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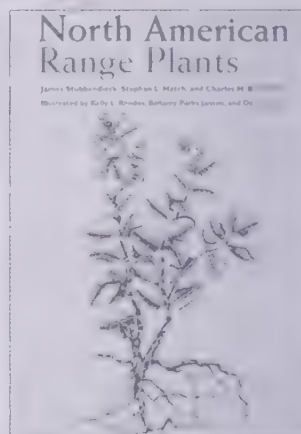
## North American Wildland Plants

A Field Guide

By James Stubbendieck, Stephan L. Hatch, and L. M. Landholt

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The *Quarterly* welcomes the submission of manuscripts and essays that are both solidly researched and interestingly written. In all cases contributions must be free of specialized jargon so that they can be read, understood, and appreciated by persons in other academic fields and by interested laypersons. Total length of manuscripts, including notes and illustrations, should not exceed thirty pages, but shorter contributions will be preferred. All copy, including notes and captions, should be double spaced. References in the notes should conform to the mode specified in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). See especially chapter 15. Manuscripts should be accompanied by two duplicate copies, a 1.44 MB disk or a CD-R computer disk, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The disk should be formatted for IBM PC and the article in WordPerfect, MSWord, or text file format. Blind review procedures are followed for all contributions to the *Quarterly*. The decision to publish an article rests with the editor in consultation with associate editors.

All correspondence on editorial matters as well as subscriptions should be addressed to: Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1155 Q Street, Hewitt Place, P.O. Box 880245, Lincoln, NE 68588-0245; email: [gpq@unl.edu](mailto:gpq@unl.edu); webpage: [www.unl.edu/plains/publications/gpq.html](http://www.unl.edu/plains/publications/gpq.html)

#### FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in *Great Plains Quarterly* during a volume year. All articles submitted to the *Quarterly* are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from the editorial board of the *Quarterly*. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies' annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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# PIECED IN THE PLAINS

## KANSAS AMISH QUILTS AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION

JANNEKEN L. SMUCKER

*was windy from south, we quilt all day.*

— Gertrude Miller, Haven, Kansas, 1927

While the Old Order Amish are often thought of as the plain-dressing religious sect that attracts millions of tourists annually to Pennsylvania Dutch country, this Anabaptist group also has a significant history in the Great Plains. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Amish formed numerous

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settlements in Kansas. Some, like the one in Yoder, continue in existence today; others, like the settlement in Dodge City, have long since been abandoned. The Amish who settled in the Great Plains share commonalities with the Old Order Amish who remained in more established settlements farther east, as well as with other, non-Amish groups who settled in the Plains during the late nineteenth century. Quilts, one of the most well-known material manifestations of Amish culture, can serve as rich cultural documents of the Amish who settled in the Plains. With quilts as a lens into the cultural and religious life of these Kansas settlers, we can learn about the characteristics that distinguish this group from “English” (as the non-Amish are called by Amish insiders) settlers and from the Amish living farther east. Just as the experiences of people living in the major Amish settlements in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana differ from those living in Kansas, so too do Kansas Amish quilts reflect

the distinct history and lifestyle of those living in the Great Plains. By and large, the quilts made by the Kansas Amish have simply been lumped together with other midwestern Amish quilts and not thoroughly explored as distinct expressions of Amish culture.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, these quilts, like Amish residents living in the Plains, can be easily grouped together with other examples of midwestern Amish quilts. Through careful artifact analysis, however, new insight into both the artifacts themselves and the unique history and culture of the Amish living in Kansas can be revealed.

#### AMISH SETTLEMENTS IN KANSAS

During the Protestant Reformation of sixteenth-century Europe, the Swiss Brethren, also known as the Anabaptists, emerged as a radical religious group. Later called Mennonites, these reformers sought a strict separation of church and state, practiced voluntary adult baptism rather than infant baptism, and refused to participate in the military because it ran counter to their view of Christ's teachings of peaceful nonviolence.<sup>2</sup> The Amish separated from the Mennonites in seventeenth-century Europe as a result of differences in discipline practices. Those desiring a stricter practice of shunning church members who digressed from the group were led by Jacob Amman, for whom the Amish were named. Amish groups began migrating to eastern Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century to seek relief from the religious persecution and economic hardships of Europe.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Amish gradually moved west, as did great numbers of the mainstream American population. The first Amish settler in Reno County, Kansas, the location of two of the only existing Amish settlements in the state, likely was Eli Yoder, who migrated from Pennsylvania in 1874. Yoder founded a small town in the center of the state, named it after himself, and eventually established a post office in his own home. This first Amish settler soon married a non-Amish woman and left the

church.<sup>3</sup> Other Amish families did not arrive until 1883. Seeking cheap land, group isolation, and religious freedom, four Amish families from Shelby County, Illinois, ventured west by train with the intention of settling in Nebraska.<sup>4</sup> When high water prevented this, a Hutchinson land agent persuaded them to come to Reno County where they settled in Yoder, Haven, and Partridge.<sup>5</sup> In subsequent years, dozens of families, many moving from communities in northern Indiana, joined this initial group.<sup>6</sup>

David Wagler's "History and Change of the Amish of Reno County, Kansas," one of the only recorded histories of the Kansas Amish, relies on oral history interviews with members of the Amish community. Wagler notes that Amish folks settled in Kansas for a variety of reasons, from cheap land to temperance. Because the Kansas settlements were "comprised of people with such a variety of motives for coming, and isolated from all of the large Amish communities, the Kansas group provided a logical setting for innovations. They were not long in coming."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Kansas Amish eventually adopted amenities and organizations considered taboo in many more-established Amish settlements, including Sunday school, modern farm equipment, and limited use of automobiles. The challenges of increased innovation and rapid cultural adaptation also spurred several more-progressive offshoot groups. By 1968 there were six church groups in the vicinity of Yoder whose membership consisted primarily of descendants of early Amish settlers in Reno County.<sup>8</sup> These more-liberal groups split from the Old Order for a variety of reasons including the use of telephones, the desire for high-wire electricity, adoption of church meetinghouses rather than the traditional Sunday services held in homes, debate over the continued use of High German in church services, the ownership of cars, and the desire to sing gospel music.<sup>9</sup> The presence of these more-liberal offshoot groups also served to keep the Old Order population from increasing substantially; there were more-liberal groups to join when problems within

the Old Order arose. In addition, members who were opposed to the adoption of modern technologies and cultural practices often returned to their "mother" settlements in Indiana and Iowa in order to renew the church discipline.<sup>10</sup>

D. Paul Miller discusses additional outside factors that affected the Amish settlements in Reno County. Oil was discovered in Reno County in 1936, prompting some Amish farmers to sell their farms to drillers and move to settlements farther east, while other Amish families faced criticism for staying and reaping monetary rewards for the oil found in their fields.<sup>11</sup> A number of Amish families who viewed their religion as compromised moved away from the area simply to avoid dealing with the greed and worldliness the oil fields would likely bring.<sup>12</sup> A few years later, additional Amish families were forced to resettle when a United States Navy air base was built on 2,500 acres of farmland west of Yoder.<sup>13</sup> These outside forces, coupled with the progressive splinter groups formed as the result of schisms within the Old Order, resulted in a small population of Old Order Amish living in Kansas. Those that remained persevered in their desire to live within the bounds of their *Ordnung*, the guidelines that govern Amish living within each community, despite the many challenges offered by the land and environment of the Great Plains.

### AMISH QUILTMaking

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a slow "sorting-out" process, or gradual schism, occurred within the Amish communities in various geographical locations; those most resistant to change emerged as the Old Order Amish.<sup>14</sup> The other group that formed at this time was known as the Amish-Mennonites. Eventually most Amish-Mennonites became affiliated with the Mennonite Church, which today is considered the most progressive rung on the Anabaptist ladder. During and after the tumultuous years of schism, something prompted Amish women to adopt the quilt-

making practices of their neighbors. Whereas mainstream Americans were making quilts as early as the eighteenth century, evidence from estate inventories and journals suggests that up until the late nineteenth century, Amish likely used woven coverlets and feather ticks as bedding, the practice of many early German immigrants.<sup>15</sup> The Amish newcomers to quilting developed their own culturally distinct form that was "in the world, but not of it," a New Testament concept often used to describe the Amish lifestyle (1 Pet. 2:11).<sup>16</sup> Perhaps years of division within the church prompted a codification of Amish quilting practices that served as a means of boundary maintenance, similar to an increased rigidity in dress practices that prohibited gaily colored or printed clothing.<sup>17</sup> In midwestern Amish communities the result was quilts pieced with repeating blocks in simple geometric patterns, often similar to those used by the "English" (Fig. 1 is a good example of this format). While their "English" neighbors pieced quilts with the wide array of printed calico fabric available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Amish quiltmakers exclusively used solid-colored fabrics. Amish quilting styles generally lagged several decades behind those of the mainstream; Amish quilt researcher Eve Wheatcroft Granick notes that "the inherently conservative nature of Amish culture permits change only in relationship to the larger outside society. What has been discarded by other American women as being out of fashion is then acceptable for possible adaptation in the Amish community."<sup>18</sup>

When Kansas first opened to settlement in 1854, settlers were encouraged to bring bedding west with them, as such supplies were hard to come by on the frontier.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, many of the oldest quilts registered in the Kansas State Quilt Project were not made in Kansas but were brought with the pioneers who settled here in the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Twenty to thirty years later, when the first communities of Amish began to settle in Kansas, they too would have likely brought bedding



with them. Because of the relatively late genesis of Amish quiltmaking in all geographic areas, these early settlers may not have had fully developed quiltmaking practices to bring along with them. For this reason, Kansas Amish quiltmaking traditions probably did not fully develop until a sustainable community was formed in the early twentieth century. The Amish living in Kansas may not have made quilts until additional Amish settlers arrived, bringing quiltmaking practices from mother settlements with them, while increased interaction prompted adoption and adaptation of the practices of their neighbors. As with Amish quiltmaking in general, the precise genesis of Kansas quiltmaking practices is difficult to pinpoint.

In studying a related religious group, Sara Reimer Farley has attempted to trace the origin of Kansas Mennonite quiltmaking. German-speaking Mennonites arrived from colonies in Russia and the Ukraine in the 1870s and 1880s, coinciding with the arrival of the first Amish groups. No known quiltmaking practices traveled with these emigrants, yet the earliest Russian Mennonite quilt found in Kansas was likely begun around 1880 by a woman who arrived just a few years prior.<sup>21</sup> The Russian Mennonites, like the Amish, had a relatively closed community that was separated from the mainstream not only by faith and history but also by language. Farley suggests that early contact with English-speaking neighbors spread the art of quiltmaking to Russian Mennonite women familiar with needlework and thus able to make the transition to a new craft.<sup>22</sup> Cultural assimilation, however, occurred at a faster rate among these Mennonites than it did among the Old Order Amish.

In addition to extant quilts, the diary entries of Gertrude Miller of Haven, Kansas, are also a testament to the importance and regularity of quiltmaking within a Kansas Amish woman's life. In her 1927 entries, a month progresses from cutting blocks, to "stickering" (likely a colloquialism for piecing), to quilting. These tasks are listed in her diary among

other chores, including churning, butchering hens, making pies, and ironing. During February and March, Gertrude worked on various aspects of quiltmaking at least once a week, and in many weeks more often. She often worked with relatives and twice during this period hosted a quilting party where a number of women joined her.<sup>23</sup> For these Kansas Amish women, quiltmaking was a regular activity and likely an important aspect of their household chores.

### QUILT ANALYSIS

In the past several decades, both fine and decorative art historians have established models for examining objects in order to determine their cultural significance, with the goals of "broadening the definition of appropriate objects for study [and] exploring more far-ranging cultural issues."<sup>24</sup> In his groundbreaking essay "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," E. McClung Fleming identifies five properties to be examined in the study of objects: history, material, construction, design, and function.<sup>25</sup> Through a process of four operations—Identification, Evaluation, Cultural Analysis, and Interpretation—Fleming advocates examination of an artifact in terms of these five properties.

Fleming's model is typically used to examine an individual object, as Linda Welters and Margaret Ordoñez do in their study of a New England quilt in their essay "Early Calico Printing in Rhode Island."<sup>26</sup> In this current study, using a modified version of the model constructed by Fleming, I have examined seven Kansas Amish quilts from the Sara Miller Collection of Amish crib quilts, part of the collections of the International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.<sup>27</sup> Rather than discussing each quilt individually, I will discuss the quilts en masse in terms of each of Fleming's five properties, using data derived from Fleming's four operations.<sup>28</sup> Such a small sampling of quilts is not an adequate means of drawing generalizations about the quiltmaking practices of this group;

however, these quilts can be used as springboards for exploring many facets of this distinct religious group and its existence in the Great Plains.

#### PROPERTY 1: HISTORY

Unfortunately, the stories many Amish quilts could tell have been lost as they enter the world of antique dealers and art collectors. This is indeed the case for the majority of quilts in the Sara Miller Collection. Two quilts with a likely Kansas origin have, however, retained a story: a bit of folklore passed on from the family to the dealer, to the collector, and eventually to the International Quilt Study Center. The red Baskets quilt (Fig. 1) was made by a Mrs. Amos Bontrager for her daughter. Unfortunately, this Mrs. Bontrager died while still a young mother. Later, her daughter made a Flower Garden quilt, the pieced hexagon pattern popular among the "English" during the 1930s. Her stepmother, the second Mrs. Amos Bontrager, pieced a Diamonds quilt (Fig. 2) for her step-grandchild using the scraps from the Flower Garden quilt. The diamond shape could have been the leftover fabric piece formed when two adjacent hexagons were cut.

Because of the nature of the Amish community, it is difficult to confirm this story by simply tracing genealogical records. Bontrager, like Yoder, Miller, and Schlabach, is a very common name among the Old Order Amish, particularly in the Kansas settlement where this quilt was likely made. The story, however, confirms both the precariousness of life in the Great Plains and the Amish commitment to family. The small Amish cemetery on Red Rock Road between Yoder and Haven, Kansas, in Reno County attests to the hardships of frontier life and the great numbers of Bontragers who lived in the area and died at a young age.<sup>29</sup> Such cemeteries are the only remnant of eight settlements established by the Amish throughout Kansas that did not survive past the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> The practice of a widowed husband quickly remarrying in order to provide a mother for his children

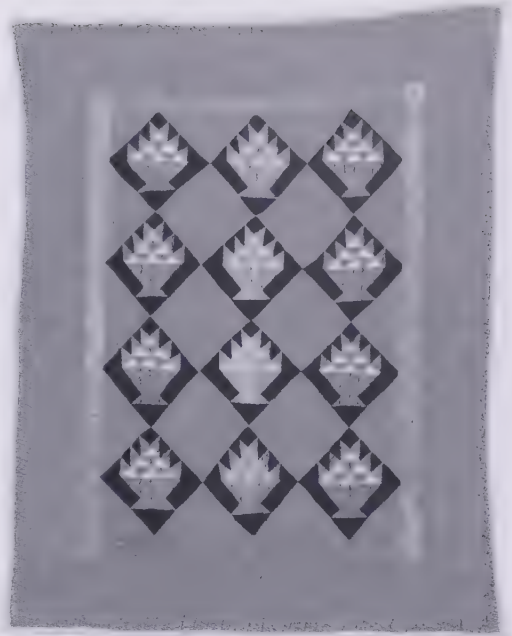


FIG. 1. *Baskets*, by Mrs. Amos Bontrager (first wife), c. 1900-20. Probably made in Haven, Kansas. International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Sara Miller Collection, 2000.007.0030.

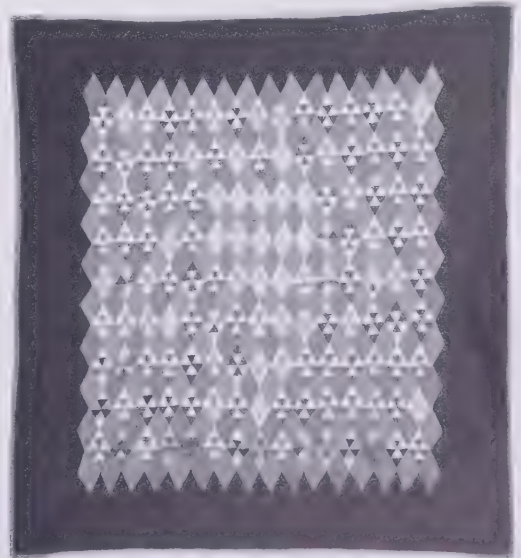


FIG. 2. *Diamonds*, by Mrs. Amos Bontrager (second wife), c. 1930-50. Probably made in Haven, Kansas. International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Sara Miller Collection, 2000.007.0047.



FIG. 3. *Log Cabin variation, maker unknown, c. 1910-30. Possibly made in Indiana; acquired in Kansas. International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Sara Miller Collection, 2000.007.0046.*

was not an uncommon occurrence among the Old Order Amish. The importance of family is also reflected in the Bontrager story attached to these two quilts. John A. Hostetler notes that Amish quilting “underscores the importance of the transgenerational family,” particularly when quilts such as this Diamonds example were given as symbols of familial affection.<sup>31</sup>

The Log Cabin-variation quilt pictured in Figure 3 is a particularly unusual Amish quilt in its construction and design. The precision and symmetry characteristic of many Amish quilts is lacking. Were it not for a strikingly similar quilt pictured in Eve Wheatcroft Granick’s seminal text *The Amish Quilt*, one might assume that this skewed Log Cabin was an anomaly.<sup>32</sup> The quilt pictured in Granick’s

book has an Indiana provenance. The similarities between the two quilts—the irregular angles of the logs, use of drab olive, blue, and gray fabrics, and the strip-pieced outer border—suggest that perhaps these two unusual quilts have a shared origin. Pairs of similar quilts are not rare; sometimes identical or similar quilts were made by sisters or by a mother for multiple children.<sup>33</sup> These quilts may have once been a pair that became separated when one sister married and moved to Reno County from northern Indiana, as young brides often did.

For women who may have been less than eager to move west, a quilt with a particular connection to a sister or friend may have indeed carried special significance. Some young wives were known to complain about the prospect of moving to Kansas: “If only those land agents would stay away and leave us alone,” one late-nineteenth-century Amish woman was recorded to have said about the shrewd tactics used to convince Amish men to make the trek west.<sup>34</sup> A quilt that traveled west with a young woman might serve as a souvenir from home, a reminder of life in a well-established, conforming community, rather than the isolated life experienced by women transplanted to the Plains. Many Kansas quilts, made by Amish and “English” alike, may have served this function. In Barbara Brackman’s study of Kansas quilts, she surmises that for women settling in the Plains, “living hundreds of miles from family, friends, and home, quilts held meaning far beyond mere utility.”<sup>35</sup> The Kansas State Quilt Project documented a significant number of quilts that were not made in Kansas but were brought with women when they migrated west.<sup>36</sup>

## PROPERTY 2: MATERIAL

Unlike in other more-established Amish communities, Kansas Amish quiltmakers tended to exclusively use cotton fabrics to make their quilts. Cotton was the predominant choice among Amish quiltmakers throughout the Midwest, but quiltmakers in



Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois often interspersed bits of wool and wool/cotton mixtures into their pieced designs. Six of the seven Kansas quilts in the Sara Miller Collection are made entirely of cotton while the seventh, a Log Cabin, contains just a bit of wool fabric and has a distinct link to Indiana (see "Property 1" above, Fig. 3). Absence of these more expensive dress wools and the elsewhere-popular sateen (a cotton satin weave fabric with a distinct sheen) indicates the economic status of the Kansas Amish. Amish quilt researcher Granick hypothesizes that the choice of fabric reflects the economic reality of the Kansas Amish community: "In Kansas . . . families were faced with the task of developing new land. Quiltmaking was still an important tradition, but time and money were directed primarily toward the goal of establishing farms. . . . Even in the twentieth century, as these communities gained strength, the issue of economics remained important."<sup>37</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century, Amish women elsewhere would have been settled into a comfortable economic situation where buying fine fabrics such as sateen specifically for quiltmaking was possible. The situation was different in Kansas; here life was harder due to the physical challenges of the land and environment. Consequently, these seven quilts are predominantly pieced from simple, plain-weave muslins and broadcloths; cotton sateens and fine dress wools remained beyond their means. The Stars quilt pictured in Figure 4 features some chambray, a multipurpose plain-weave fabric woven with a colored warp yarn and a white filling. Granick cites an 1895 fabric merchant's advertisement placed in the *Sugarcreek Budget*, an Ohio newspaper read nationally by the Amish, that listed "best chambray" at 10-1/2 cents per yard, compared to plain calico at 4 and 5 cents per yard.<sup>38</sup> "Cashmere, half wool," likely a wool/cotton mixture, was advertised at prices three times as high as plain calico.<sup>39</sup>

Some quiltmakers bought fabric from traveling fabric salesmen from Shipshewana, Indiana, from near where many young Amish

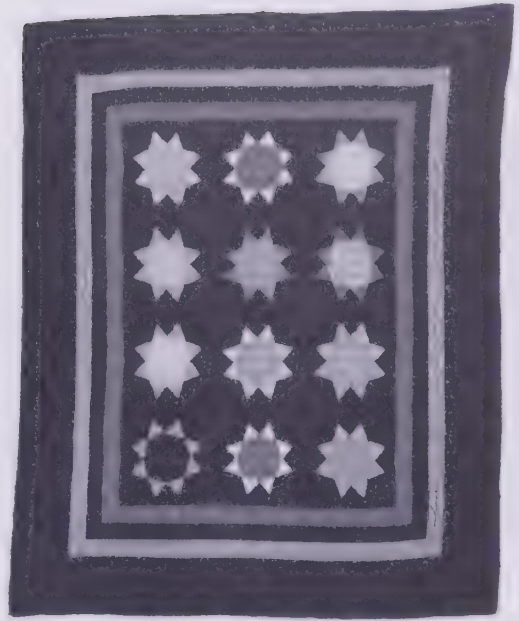


FIG. 4. *Stars*, maker unknown, c. 1920-40. Possibly made in Haven, Kansas. International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Sara Miller Collection, 2000.007.0032.

women left to venture to the Great Plains with a new husband.<sup>40</sup> This fabric, as well as the contact with the salesman from back home, was a link to the community the women had left behind. While many "English" also left behind familiar surroundings in order to settle in the Great Plains, the Amish emphasis on community, as defined by the German word *Gemeinde*, may have made the transition to a new, isolated environment even more difficult. *Gemeinde* instilled a sense of uniformity and conformity among the members of the Amish church; as Amish sociologist Hostetler summarizes, "Every Amish person knows the accepted way of doing things."<sup>41</sup> Without the stability of the community and its *Ordnung*, the guidelines that govern living within the community, a member of the church might feel lost. Quilts and quiltmaking practices from home, including the materials informally sanctioned by the *Ordnung*, may have provided a



FIG. 5. *Stars*, maker unknown, c. 1900-1920. Possibly made in Hutchinson, Kansas. International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Sara Miller Collection, 2000.007.0005.

sense of *Gemeinde* that was hard to find in the Plains.

An acknowledgment of the importance of the mother settlements, the older Amish communities from which Kansas settlers came, is reflected in the colors used in many Kansas quilts. The bold red fabrics used in the *Baskets* (Fig. 1) and *Lost Ships* quilts likely reflect the particular fondness Indiana Amish women had for the color. Red was not permissible for dresses but red fabric was bought expressly for making quilts.<sup>42</sup> While some quiltmakers may have specifically chosen brightly colored fabrics to add joy to their surroundings, other quiltmakers may have instead embraced the colors readily found in the Plains. The tan and blue fabrics used to make the *Stars* quilt (Fig. 5) reflect the color combination of the blue sky and the prairie, as do the fabrics used to piece the baskets in the *Baskets* quilt (Fig. 1).

### PROPERTY 3: CONSTRUCTION

Amish quilts from all settlements have traditionally been pieced using simple geometric designs; in midwestern communities, quiltmakers most often made quilts with repeating block patterns. Granick estimates that the Amish groups in the Midwest commonly used approximately twenty-five quilt patterns.<sup>43</sup> Piecing is the technique of attaching together pieces of fabric, often squares or triangles, to form a geometric design. The limitations of piecing were well suited to the Amish prohibition against representational images as commanded by the Old Testament scripture, "You shall not make for yourself a graven image or a likeness of anything" (Exod. 20:4).<sup>44</sup> For this reason, appliqué, the technique of sewing a decorative piece of fabric on top of a base fabric to create a representational design not easily achieved by piecing geometric shapes together, was not often used by Amish quiltmakers. In addition, frugal and ever-practical Amish quiltmakers may have considered covering up one layer of fabric with a second a wasteful practice. At least one Kansas Amish quiltmaker skirted this guideline for Amish quiltmaking and utilized appliqué in her creation of a *Baskets* quilt that features curved handles on 30 miniature baskets. In her adaptation of a borrowed "English" pattern, she modified the appliqué technique necessary to create the basket handles found on each block. Rather than adopting the mainstream "English" practice of using tiny, hidden hand-appliqué stitches, this quiltmaker machine-stitched the handles down with dark thread. This approach kept the quiltmaker free from the sins of pride and wastefulness but allowed her to use the pattern that required appliqué.

This quiltmaker navigated an issue similar to those faced by Amish farmers in the Great Plains. Unlike in the areas from which the Kansas Amish had migrated, the crop of choice in Reno County was winter wheat, a crop brought to Kansas by the Russian Mennonites, Anabaptist cousins of the Amish, when

they emigrated from Russia in the 1870s. The expanse of land necessary for wheat farming and the problems with traction that occurred with horse farming prompted the Kansas Amish to adopt use of tractors more readily than in mother settlements farther east.<sup>45</sup> This adoption of technology was common in the Kansas Amish settlements, perhaps because "their small numbers and isolation from other major areas of Amish settlement has increased their susceptibility to acculturative pressures."<sup>46</sup> For whatever reasons, from their initial settlement in the Plains, the Kansas Amish were quick to adopt new technologies and customs that would not have been embraced by stricter *Ordnung* of older communities farther east.

Much as the maker of the Baskets quilt attempted to hide her adoption of a fancy technique, some Kansas Amish also tried to disguise their technological adaptations. Most Old Order Amish church districts rejected automobile ownership in the early twentieth century due to expense, the ability of cars to weaken family ties with increased mobility, and the general worldliness of automobiles.<sup>47</sup> At present, nearly all Old Order Amish continue to refrain from owning and driving cars. The Amish living in the Partridge district in Reno County, however, developed their own compromise to dealing with the automobile. After their required alternative service as conscientious objectors during the war, some young Amish men returned to their home community wanting to drive cars as they were permitted to in their urban alternative-service placements. While cars were clearly against the group's *Ordnung*, some Amish men improvised and stripped down cars to look like utilitarian trucks that might serve a purpose on a farm. These cars, called "hoopies," often had the backseat replaced by a box and sometimes had the doors torn off.<sup>48</sup> Like dark machine-appliqué stitches, the hoopie better suited Amish sensibilities than might a more obvious adaptation of worldly "English" practices. The hoopie, however, was relatively short-

lived. In 1958 the local Amish bishop finally decided against the ownership of automobiles, prompting those in favor of cars to split from the church, forming the Center Amish Mennonite Church.<sup>49</sup>

#### PROPERTY 4: DESIGN

The designs and motifs used on Kansas Amish quilts also reflect the acculturation occurring in the Plains. In general, quilts made in midwestern Amish communities exhibit distinct ties to mainstream, or "English," quilts of the same era. Midwestern Amish quiltmakers adapted the quilting vernacular of mainstream American quiltmakers, who by the mid-nineteenth century were often using the repeating block format. The classic midwestern Amish interpretation of this style, often found in quilts made in the large Amish settlements in Ohio and Indiana, consists of repeated pieced blocks set diagonally, alternating with unpieced blocks. Often a narrow frame and a wider contrasting outer border surround this design field of blocks. All of the Kansas Amish quilts I studied retained the wide outer border of the classic style. The use of narrow frames varied, with four quilts having no inner frame and the remaining quilts having from one to three frames. Six quilts have the classic scheme of blocks set diagonally. All have a contrasting binding; only one has rounded corners.

The Amish who settled in the Great Plains faced many struggles, such as droughts, blizzards, and dust storms, alongside their "English" neighbors. Cultural exchange in many forms, including the sharing of quilt patterns, surely occurred over these decades of survival on the frontier. Amish living in Kansas were in fact somewhat quicker to adopt various "English" amenities not readily used in older settlements, including curtains and carpets.<sup>50</sup> Stylized baskets like those featured in two of the quilts would not have been among the accepted repertoire of early Amish quiltmakers, but would have been adopted from "English" patterns, whether viewed on the



clothesline or through a face-to-face mode of exchange.

From her interviews with Amish women, Granick learned that some Amish quiltmakers would use patterns published in magazines such as *Farmer's Guide* and *Farmer's Wife*, or those included in Mountain Mist quilt batting, just as many "English" quiltmakers of the first half of the twentieth century did.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the block found on one of the examined quilts was published as the pattern "Ducks and Ducklings" in the *Farm Journal*.<sup>52</sup> These farm periodicals catered not only to the men farmers but also to farmwives who made ready use of the published quilt patterns. Through periodicals, Amish women had access to the same patterns as "English" quiltmakers, without a formal means of exchange taking place.

Other patterns, including the Stars motif used in the quilt shown in Figure 4, were likely the result of innovative, experimental quiltmakers not bound by the strict standards that may have governed quiltmakers in less-isolated Amish communities. The unusual insertion of an obtuse triangle on each side of the tiny two-inch squares that form the center of each star make the stars appear fat. Star quilts of all sorts were popular among both Amish and "English" quiltmakers. The tan and blue Stars variation (Fig. 5) is another example of how a quiltmaker interpreted a typical star pattern. The inconsistent use of assorted shades of blue and tan fabric resulted in some blocks reading as typical stars, while others appear as crosses and still other blocks have too little contrast to even reveal the pieced pattern. Gertrude Miller also pieced star quilts, although her diary does not indicate her motivations or how she may have assembled this popular motif. Her February 18, 1927, diary entry simply reads: "was sun shine but cold put two quilts together. they were star quilts."<sup>53</sup>

#### PROPERTY 6: FUNCTION

The small, infant-size quilts found in the Sara Miller Collection were made, as all Amish quilts were traditionally made, with the in-

tention of utility. Intricately pieced quilts are not the simplest means of providing bed coverings for a child, but a quilt melds utility and aesthetics in a distinct way. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Amish quilt authors Rachel and Kenneth Pellman describe the privacy surrounding Amish pregnancy in the early part of the twentieth century: "In many cases women shared their secret only with their husbands. . . . It was considered better to wait and see that everything would be without complications before collecting clothing and layette accessories. Thus crib quilts were made by mothers, grandmothers, aunts or other relatives after the baby arrived."<sup>54</sup> If this sentiment was true in a prosperous community in eastern Pennsylvania, it was likely amplified in small, isolated Amish settlements in the perilous Plains.

Rows of gravestones mark the premature deaths of infants and children at the Amish cemetery between Haven and Yoder (see Fig. 6). The reality of infant mortality may have indeed prompted mothers and grandmothers to refrain from creating quilts in celebration of an infant's arrival until it seemed certain that the child would live. One unsuccessful Amish settlement in western Kansas faced this sad truth twofold. Willie Wagler recounts that at the short-lived Amish settlement in Ford County, Kansas, seventeen children died from 1905 through 1917. Years of drought, in contrast to the promised rain advertised by land agents, forced the demise of the settlement.<sup>55</sup> The last Amish family left the settlement in 1922; many of the families moved east to Reno County. The graveyard full of children's headstones was not cared for after the Amish families had all left. So in 1939 a group of former Ford County residents and their friends and neighbors in Reno County disinterred the coffins of the seventeen children and moved and reburied them the following day at the Amish cemetery near Partridge. Seven of the children were unnamed infant sons and daughters of Amish families.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps the fact that these quilts even exist and were not worn to shreds by consecutive children in large Amish



FIG. 6. Gravestone at the Amish cemetery between Yoder and Haven Kansas. This grave marks the death of one of the many Amish children who died in the Great Plains. Photograph by author.

families attests to their limited use due to the uncertain nature of childhood in this time and place.

An additional function of these quilts was much less utilitarian. As highlighted by Gertrude Miller's diary, quilting brought together friends and family for a common purpose that allowed for social interaction.<sup>57</sup> On March 15, 1927, she wrote, "we had a quilting" and proceeded to list the attendees, using the man's first name to identify the woman—the usual practice in Amish communities with many similar names: "Jake Sarah, Ola Coblentz, Mattie, Noah Mary, Harvey Mary, Joe Polly, Yost Mary."<sup>58</sup> These quilts connected not only individuals within the local community but quiltmakers with their mother settlements by using familiar materials and techniques. This function of creating *Gemeinde* may have been just as important as the more obvious function of providing bed covering to a child.

## CONCLUSION

Are these anonymous, dateless quilts culturally significant? The stories they can tell are limited by their lack of documentation.

Other quilts, laboriously stitched with names and dates, might give us more information about the lives of specific quiltmakers. But equally important are quiet quilts such as those in the Sara Miller Collection, made by quiltmakers pursuing a simple, yet challenging existence in small towns such as Haven, Kansas. The experiences of the Old Order Amish living in the Great Plains are not entirely unique. They, like other Amish, struggle to lead lives void of the temptations modern society offers, while living lives obedient to their interpretation of God's will. The Kansas Amish, like their "English" counterparts, sought land, freedom, and adventure in the Great Plains. A simple, crib-size patchwork quilt is unable to speak loudly and distinctly of these adventures. Yet these small quilts, viewed within the context of the culture, time, and geographic region in which they were made, can elucidate aspects of this little-studied group of Amish who ventured away from the major settlements and attempted life in the Great Plains. Without a careful examination of the quilts themselves, as well as the history and experiences of these people, we could generically refer to both the people and the quilts simply as "Amish." A closer look reveals that this community and these quilts, while no doubt Amish, are also shaped by their existence in the Great Plains and thus are uniquely "Kansas Amish."

## NOTES

1. Rarely are quilts from this region specifically addressed in research on Amish quilts. In *The Amish Quilt* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1989), Eve Wheatcroft Granick gives an overview of the quilting styles of various geographic regions but surmises that little distinguishes these quilts from those made in "mother" communities elsewhere in the Midwest. Other authors, including the Museum of American Folk Art's Elizabeth V. Warren, also lump midwestern communities together. See Warren, "Amish Quilts in the Museum of American Folk Art," *Folk Art: The Magazine of the Museum of American Folk Art*, v. 24 (Summer 1999): 23-24. The plates in Donald B. Kraybill, Patricia T. Herr, and Jonathan Holstein's *A Quiet Spirit: Amish Quilts from the Collection of Cindy Tietze*

and Stuart Hodosh (Los Angeles: UCLA Museum of Cultural History, 1996), are separated into three categories: Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Other Regions. Perhaps there are few distinguishing visual characteristics that separate Kansas quilts from those made elsewhere in the Midwest, but that does not eliminate the existence of distinct motivations, symbolic meanings, or cultural significance. For other regional studies of Amish quilts, see Ricky Clark's examination of Ohio Amish quilts, "Germanic Aesthetics, Germanic Communities," in *Quilts in Community: Ohio's Traditions*, ed. Ricky Clark, 20-45 (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1991); Patricia T. Herr's studies of Amish quilts of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in *Quilting Traditions: Pieces from the Past* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2000) and "Quilts within the Amish Culture," in Kraybill, Herr, and Holstein, *A Quiet Spirit*, 45-67; and David Pottenger, *Quilts from the Indiana Amish: A Regional Collection* (New York: Dutton, 1983).

2. Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1992), 9-10. For additional historical and cultural background on the Old Order Amish, see Theron Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America*, The Mennonite Experience in America, vol. 2 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988); Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, eds., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994); John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Donald B. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); and David Luthy, *The Amish in America: Settlements that Failed, 1840-1960* (Aylmer, ON, and Lagrange, IN: Pathway Publishers, 1986).

3. David Wagler, "History and Change of the Amish of Reno County, Kansas" (unpublished paper, Bethel College, North Newton, KS, 1968), 6-7.

4. D. Paul Miller, "Amish Acculturation" (master's thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1950), 26; Wagler, "History and Change," 7.

5. Wagler, "History and Change," 7.

6. *Ibid.*, 8.

7. *Ibid.*, 10.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 21, 23.

10. Miller, 59.

11. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

12. *Ibid.*, 59.

13. *Ibid.*, 60.

14. Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 140.

15. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 25; Herr, "Quilts within the Amish Culture," 46.

16. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 22.

17. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 218.

18. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 31.

19. Barbara Brackman, "Rocky Road to Kansas," in *Kansas Quilts and Quilters*, 54-55 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

20. The Kansas State Quilt Project conducted a survey of the quilts existing in the state. All fifty states have conducted similar surveys. Brackman, "Rocky Road to Kansas," 21-22.

21. Sara Reimer Farley, "The Developing Mennonite Quilting Tradition: A History of Culture and Faith," in *Kansas Quilts and Quilters*, 135.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Gertrude Miller diary, February-March 1927, private collection of Marilyn Lehman, Austin, TX. I became acquainted with Lehman after she gave a presentation about the diaries at the Mennonite/ Writing Conference, October 2002, Goshen College, Goshen, IN.

24. Kenneth L. Ames, "The Stuff of Everyday Life: American Decorative Arts and Household Furnishings," in *Material Culture*, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth, 104 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985).

25. E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," *Winterthur Portfolio* 9 (1974): 156.

26. Linda Welters and Margaret Ordoñez, "Early Calico Printing in Rhode Island," in *Uncoverings 2001* (Lincoln, NE: American Quilt Study Group, 2001), 65-86.

27. The International Quilt Study Center acquired the Sara Miller Collection in 2000 as a generous gift from Robert and Ardis James. Miller, who spent much of her life as a member of the Old Order Amish, purchased the quilts from a dealer who bought the quilts directly from Amish and formerly Amish families throughout the Midwest. Unfortunately, most information about specific quilts that the dealer may have gleaned from the families, such as maker and date, did not accompany the quilts to Miller or to the IQSC. However, the dealer often indicated where he acquired specific quilts. The quilts studied here were all acquired in Kansas. The IQSC practices a conservative assigning of attribution, using the terms "probably" and "possibly" to indicate geographic origin if definitive provenance is not solidly documented. Although these quilts were acquired in Kansas, the IQSC cannot say with certainty that they were made there due to the practice of frequent migration within the Amish community.

28. I modified the Fleming Model to accommodate the examination of multiple artifacts in one study. Rather than following the very linear, systematic model Fleming promotes, this entailed a more free-flowing examination of the quilts, with



some quilts serving as clear candidates for discussion of a specific property.

29. I visited this cemetery in November and December 2002 and was struck by the rows of graves marking the deaths of infants and children. The names Bontrager, Miller, Yoder, and Schrock appeared with high frequency.

30. See Luthy, *Amish in America*.

31. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 166.

32. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 156.

33. Janneken Smucker, *Amish Crib Quilts from the Midwest: The Sara Miller Collection* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003), 58.

34. Gideon L. Fisher, "An Early Move to Kansas," in Luthy, *Amish in America*, 133.

35. Brackman, "Rocky Road to Kansas," 17.

36. Appendix to *Kansas Quilts and Quilters*, 192.

37. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 144, 145.

38. *Ibid.*, 60.

39. *Ibid.*, 61.

40. Judy Shroeder Tomlinson, *Mennonite Quilts and Pieces* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1985), 8; Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 143.

41. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 236.

42. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 128.

43. Eve Wheatcroft Granick, "Amish Quilts: Icons of Faith," in *Amish Quilts 1880 to 1940 from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown*, 13 (Ann

Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2000).

44. Kraybill, *Riddle of Amish Culture*, 34.

45. James A. Knight, "Pluralism, Boundary Maintenance, and Cultural Persistence among the Amish" (master's thesis, Wichita State University, 1977), 90.

46. *Ibid.*, 94.

47. Nolt, *History of the Amish*, 216.

48. Wagler, "History and Change," 25.

49. *Ibid.*, 28.

50. *Ibid.*, 14.

51. Granick, *Amish Quilt*, 173.

52. Barbara Brackman, *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns* (Paducah, KY: American Quilter's Society, 1993), 304-5. Brackman does not indicate the date this pattern was published in *Farm Journal*.

53. Miller diary, February 18, 1927.

54. Rachel and Kenneth Pellman, *Amish Crib Quilts* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1985), 10.

55. Luthy, *Amish in America*, 143-44.

56. Willie Wagler, "Moving the Cemetery," in *Amish Roots: A Treasury of Amish History, Wisdom, and Lore*, ed. John A. Hostetler, 54-55 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

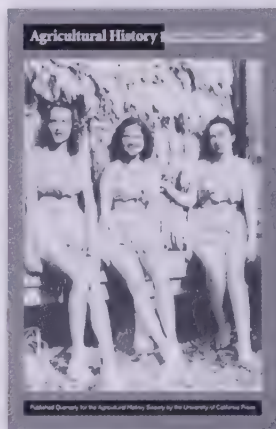
57. Miller diary, February-March 1927; Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 167.

58. Miller diary, March 15, 1927.

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# A DAKOTA BOOMTOWN

## SIoux FALLS, 1877-1880

GARY D. OLSON

The “Dakota boom” is a label historians have almost universally adopted to describe the period of settlement in Dakota Territory between the years 1878 and 1887. The term “boom” has been applied to this period largely because of the volume of land claimed and the rapid increase in Dakota Territory’s population that occurred during those years. Most accounts of this time period have treated the Dakota boom as a rural phenomenon, and certainly its main manifestation was the rapid

claiming of land by immigrant and American would-be farm owners in the plains of Dakota Territory and adjacent areas. Less well known is the impact this rapid, large-scale settling of the land had on the rise and growth of townsites aspiring to become prosperous cities. We know the rural landscape changed as sod houses and dugouts were erected, fields plowed, and trees planted. But what impact did the boom have on the urban landscape?

This essay is a case study examining the evolution of a specific Plains townsite, Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, into a prosperous town when it experienced a rapid infusion of population as a result of the Dakota boom. I will argue that the experience of Sioux Falls was typical of the growing urban areas between 1877 and 1880. Unlike some towns on the Plains, Sioux Falls had a natural asset in its water power, and it was fortunate in acquiring early rail connections to the settled areas farther east. But in most other ways Sioux Falls was similar to dozens of townsites that experienced the same opportunities and problems brought by the torrential stream of prospective land seekers who inundated the surrounding countryside. Thus, Sioux Falls can help us

KEY WORDS: Dakota Boom, Dakota Territory, Immigrants, Northern Plains, Sioux Falls.

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to understand better what the Dakota boom meant to the emerging urban centers of the region. This focus on looking at the growth of urban areas on the Plains is important because the prevailing stereotype in many popular books, films, and even some textbooks is to view this time period as a strictly rural phenomenon. As we will see in the data on Sioux Falls, the image of the lone farmer with his sod house should be accompanied by the image of a soon to be prosperous business leader living in a thriving cityscape.

Several historians have contributed significantly to our understanding of the process by which the Great Plains was settled, and the current study builds on them. John C. Hudson has helped us to understand better the role of railroads in creating towns on the western frontier. He has also used census data to plot the movement of people from various states and foreign countries into and out of the Plains states. William Silag, in his study of mobility in the Sioux City region, used the federal census and other public records to define better the characteristics of that region's mobile population, a phenomena common to the frontier generally. Two classic writers on frontier urban history, Lewis Atherton and Daniel Boorstin, have focused mainly on the general elements that were important in giving frontier townsites success or failure. In contrast, this study applies the concept of microhistory, a model provided by Gilbert Fite in his study of "agricultural pioneering."<sup>1</sup>

The centerpiece of information for this study is derived from the 1880 tenth federal census. The federal census provides a "snapshot" of Sioux Falls at the time the information was collected. It contains copious information on each person listed, including gender, age, marital status, literacy, occupation, place of residence, place of birth, and parents' place of birth. The information in the 1880 federal census has been tabulated and cross-tabulated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This process enables the census data to provide an insight into these residents, where they came from

and what they did, as well as to allow some inferences to be drawn about the nature of the community.

It must be noted, of course, that quantification data, while providing access to new historical information, has its own limitations. The process of entering the data into the SPSS program requires subjective categorization. The residents' occupations were assigned to categories of professional, self-employed business, skilled and unskilled labor, clerks, and public officials. Not all listed occupations lent themselves obviously to any one category. For instance, into which category would one place a cook in a hotel, the foreman of a railroad crew, or a prostitute? It is also true that census takers were not always as careful or complete as a researcher might wish, and residents could not always provide information, like their parents' place of birth. Still, if one recognizes that these and other limitations of the data information exist, quantification can be very illuminating, especially when other sources of information are scarce or absent.

Population growth alone confirms that Sioux Falls shared in the Dakota boom. From a population of about 600 in 1876, the federal census of 1880 counted 2,164 residents in Sioux Falls, which by the 1890 census had increased to slightly more than 10,000. In short, the city grew by a factor of nearly sixteen in the boom period. Statistically, the census reveals that the residents of Sioux Falls in 1880 were predominately white, male, single, young, and literate. In this regard Sioux Falls in 1880 was probably typical of most new towns at the edge of the midwestern American frontier. Beyond the time period of this study, however, Sioux Falls became atypical in the sense that it did not boom and bust but continued to grow and prosper long after many other boomtowns of the "Great Dakota Boom" had stagnated or even disappeared.

#### THE ANTICIPATORY PHASE

First, it must be said that the boom began in Sioux Falls slightly earlier than it did in

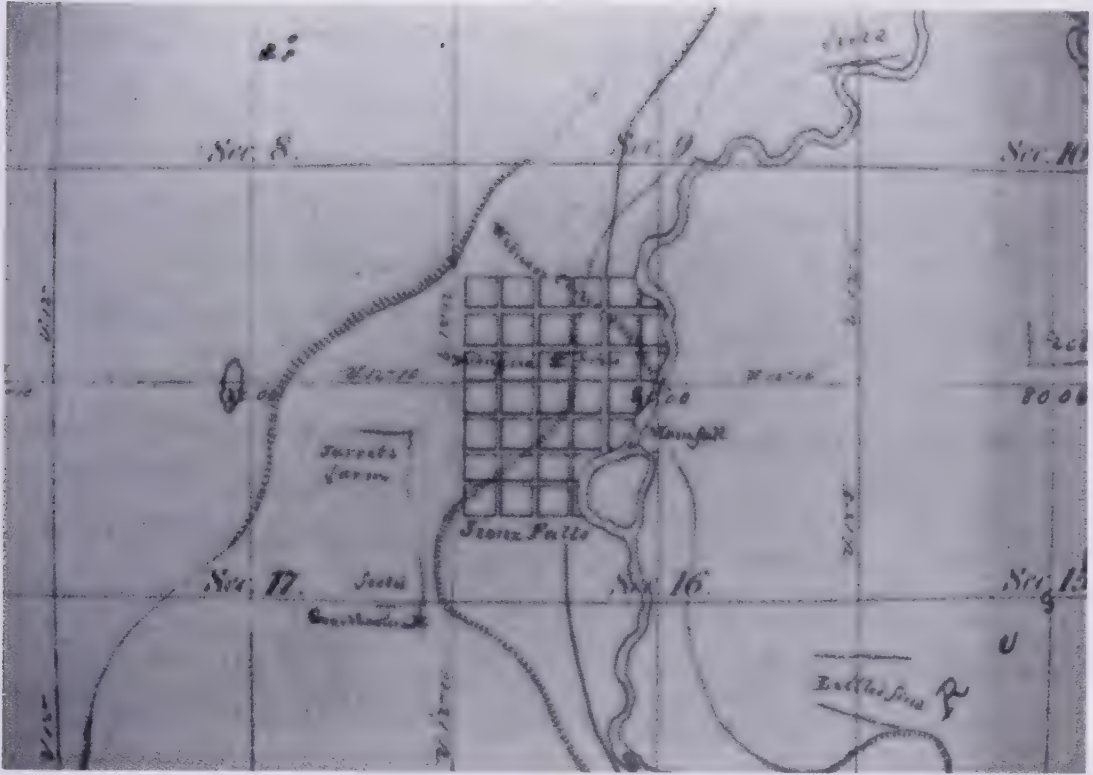


FIG. 1. United States government survey map of Sioux Falls, 1859. Courtesy of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.

Dakota Territory as a whole. By December 1877 a newspaper article reprinted from the *Austin (MN) Register* reported that Sioux Falls "residents claim 1500 inhabitants."<sup>2</sup> This was a bit optimistic, for five months later the local *Pantagraph* announced that Sioux Falls had "at this time" a population of over 1,000 residents, "which has increased more than one half during the past year."<sup>3</sup> The *Austin* journalist, who had just returned from a visit to Sioux Falls in November 1877, observed that "a great many houses have been built this summer and several are now in course of erection."<sup>4</sup> The note of surprise in this report probably stemmed from the fact that everything the visitor from Austin had observed had taken place before Sioux Falls had secured a rail connection to the outside world. All building materials and merchandise were still

being brought in via freight wagons from the railhead of the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad, which had been moving closer during 1877 but by December was still about twenty miles away at Beaver Creek. This early population boom anticipated the coming of the railroad to Sioux Falls.

In March 1878 the *Sioux Falls Pantagraph* reported that "the rush of travel has fully begun." Every day brought large numbers of new arrivals. The hotels, the *Pantagraph* observed, "are crowded to their utmost capacity; the boarding houses have eager customers for all their hash; the livery stable keepers are taxed to the utmost capacity to supply newcomers with conveyances to visit the adjacent country . . . [and] the lumber dealers are up to their eyes in business." The newspaper went on to describe the atmosphere of Sioux Falls: "The



FIG. 2. The last remnant of Fort Dakota, a barracks, was removed from the middle of Phillips Avenue in July 1873. Courtesy of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.

noise of the saw and hammer is heard in all parts of the town from morning till night.”<sup>5</sup> In April the *Pantagraph* announced that new arrivals were increasing, averaging about forty-five per day, “coming by stage, by livery, by freighters’ wagons and on foot.” Some, the newspaper explained, stayed in town “looking for business chances,” but most headed right for the surrounding area “in search of farms or claims.” All the businessmen in town, the writer continued, “feel the salutary effect of the enormously increased demand for merchandise and services.”<sup>6</sup> Naturally, the population pressure had an impact on real estate prices. In June 1878 a visitor from the *Sioux City Journal* reported that houses and buildings were scarce—“remarkably so”—resulting in real estate prices doubling during the previous three years. The *Pantagraph* confessed in

June that Sioux Falls had been overwhelmed by being “the vortex of a whirlpool of immigration for months.”<sup>7</sup>

#### THE BOOM

The federal land office had been moved to Sioux Falls in 1873, but the pace of its business clearly accelerated in the spring of 1878. The *Pantagraph* reported that “crowds of home seekers” besieging the US Land Office were increasing. In April alone the office had disposed of nearly 200,000 acres of land, a 50 percent increase over the previous month. The city’s eight hotels and numerous boardinghouses, said the *Pantagraph*, were “crowded continually.” Hundreds, the newspaper reported, were arriving every week, so that it estimated the population of the town to be “at least” 1,250 residents.<sup>8</sup>



And still the rush continued. A week later the *Pantagraph* was complimenting the Land Office personnel for holding up so well under the pressure of business. It appeared, announced the *Pantagraph*, that business in May would be fifty percent greater than in April. An average of more than seventy claims a day were being filed, with a high point of 134 claims filed on the previous Monday, a disposal of 160 acres every three minutes.<sup>9</sup> This is how the term "doing a land-office business" gained its meaning.

Local newspapers might be accused of using what historian Daniel Boorstin has termed the "language of anticipation,"<sup>10</sup> but thanks to the reprinting of articles on Sioux Falls in regional newspapers, we have some outside verification of what Sioux Falls was like during this boom period. In late July 1878 a correspondent for the *Sioux City Journal* visited Sioux Falls and reported that "the streets are crowded with teams and the sidewalks with people as are also the eleven different hotels in the city." The Cataract House had just added fifty rooms by building a new three-story addition, wrote the Sioux City visitor, and building, he observed, "was being carried on extensively." Houses, additions to hotels, livery stables, and business buildings were "springing up in every direction . . ." And business was good. It was "perfectly astonishing," wrote the Sioux City observer, to see the amount of machinery being sold to area farmers. He had learned that twenty-five harvesters had been sold and delivered in a single day the previous week.<sup>11</sup> A reprinted article from the *Bodhead (WI) Independent* reported that Sioux Falls had eleven dry-goods stores, fourteen groceries, six hardware stores, and an equal number of lumberyards plus several each of the usual tailors, shoemakers, harness makers, and so on. There were ten blacksmith shops, two newspapers, six doctors, seven or eight saloons, fifty or more lawyers, and five or six church denominations but only two actual churches.<sup>12</sup>

On the evening of July 30, 1878, the long-awaited railroad locomotive finally steamed into Sioux Falls. The *Pantagraph* said it was

the prospect of having the railroad that had given Sioux Falls its growth to that point, which has been the "wonder of the whole country." The newspaper speculated that the railroad would make the region tributary to Sioux Falls, and that this is what would bring her "still further growth." "We are wonderfully glad," exclaimed the writer. "Who wouldn't be?" he asked rhetorically.<sup>13</sup>

By August the *Pantagraph* reported that twenty-two men were hard at work building a grain elevator of 60,000-bushel capacity in hopes of being ready for the new harvest. A visiting journalist from Rochelle, Illinois, reported in the same month that two or three new stores were to open that week, each with \$15,000 of dry-goods stock, and that new stores were opening up "as fast as the buildings can be got ready for them, which is from three to four a week." "It is all business here," he wrote, "everyone something ado . . . the lumberman selling his carload per day, the mechanic, teamster and day laborer, all find plenty to do." What was the explanation for this explosive business activity? The Illinois visitor explained that people came to Sioux Falls "from as far away as one hundred miles to trade."<sup>14</sup>

Being the railhead was even better than being a prospective railhead. Up to August 1, 1878, a total of 125 new buildings had been constructed in Sioux Falls, two-thirds of which were houses and the rest business buildings. Business lots (22 by 150 feet) were selling for \$500 to \$1,000 and residence lots (50 by 150 feet) from \$40 to \$100.<sup>15</sup> It was definitely a heady atmosphere, and the term "boom" seems clearly appropriate to describe Sioux Falls as the year 1878 drew to a close. Even a visitor from Canton, a rival town for area business, was impressed by what he saw. Writing his observations on September 19, he marveled at the construction that the railroad's arrival had stimulated. In five weeks a "mammoth elevator," a neat freight and passenger depot, an engine house and turntable, three lumberyards, a hotel, and other buildings had been constructed. Every lumberyard, he wrote, "is daily thronged with teams loading for the coun-



FIG. 3. Sioux Falls was a one-street town when this photo was taken in 1876. C. K. Howard's store, which "specialized in everything," is on the near left, alongside the first brick building constructed in 1875. Courtesy of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.

try, while the streets are filled with teams, and the sidewalks and business places thronged with pedestrians and customers." On just one day he had counted twenty-three immigrant wagons passing through town.<sup>16</sup>

Even a writer from the *St. Paul Press* was impressed by what he saw while visiting Sioux Falls in November 1878. The town, he observed, was "one of the most marked instances of sudden growth and success" he had ever seen. It was, he reported, "a model western town" that was destined to become "a city of ten thousand inhabitants in ten years." His only complaint was that everyone in Sioux Falls smoked or chewed, and the town, he said, "stinks with the poison odor."<sup>17</sup> As the year 1879 began, the *Pantagraph* editor looked back on the previous year in wonderment. He listed all the construction and investment of 1878,

which showed an approximate "doubling of the building property of the town during the year." And it was clear that despite the constant construction, the demand for new houses and business buildings had not been satisfied. Indeed, in January 1879 the *Pantagraph* editor claimed "there is not in Sioux Falls a vacant building and many residences furnish homes for two, three and even four families." The writer attributed the increased growth of the town to the completion of the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad to Sioux Falls which, he estimated, gave the town a trading area four times larger than before.<sup>18</sup>

Given this rapid influx of new settlers, one might expect Sioux Falls to be a typical frontier town where law and order was minimal and crime an accepted reality. The *Pantagraph* commented on this matter early in 1879 when

it said the court's volume of business reveals "something of the character of the people among whom it is located." In all of 1878, the editor reported, only forty criminal cases had been tried and many of them had come from parts of the county outside the city. There had been no murders, only eleven charges of larceny, ten assault and battery charges, and eleven arrested for drunkenness, along with a few less serious crimes.<sup>19</sup>

Still, Sioux Falls did have the seamier aspects of a frontier town. The town had about a dozen saloons and at least two houses of prostitution. In the latter category H. S. Doyle, a forty-six-year-old woman born in New York, was listed in the 1880 census schedule as a prostitute, as were four other women listed as boarders in her residence. These women, ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-four, were born in New York, Minnesota, and Indiana. The second "house of ill repute" was run by M. J. Rudgden, a thirty-year-old woman, who was listed as the head of the household. Her husband, age twenty-two, was termed a bartender. An eight-year-old son with a different last name was apparently the madam's from a former marriage. All three were second-generation English. In addition, this house employed a cook and four women, ages sixteen to twenty-three, who were listed as prostitutes. Two were born in England and two had parents born in Maine.

Almost as soon as Sioux Falls had secured one railroad, it began to worry about the absence of rail competition. Meetings were held to consider how other railroads could be enticed to build into Sioux Falls and compete with the Worthington and Sioux Falls line, thereby lowering freight rates and raising the price paid for farmers' grain. At a meeting late in March 1879 those present unanimously passed a resolution that Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County should "do all in their power" to secure a railroad connection from the south.<sup>20</sup> By September two railroad companies were headed toward Sioux Falls: the Sioux City and Pembina was building north from Canton and the Southern Minnesota was

building south from Flandreau. The first of these became the Dakota Southern shortly before it finally reached Sioux Falls in December 1879. It was 1881 before the Southern Minnesota entered Sioux Falls, and soon after the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company acquired it.<sup>21</sup>

When spring came in 1879 the rush of land seekers began anew. Early in June the *Pantagraph* editor exclaimed that "the immigration into Dakota this year is simply monstrous."<sup>22</sup> It appears that Sioux Falls continued to share in this continuing stream of settlers, especially as it served as the railhead for a large surrounding area. Late in June a group of newspaper editors from Illinois and Minnesota visited Sioux Falls as part of a tour of western communities, and they came away impressed by what they had seen and experienced. People, wrote the editor from Greenville, Illinois, were "pouring in very fast." He described Sioux Falls as a "thriving bustling place" of 2,000 residents and estimated that the town would number 10,000 in another two years.<sup>23</sup> As it turned out, of course, this prediction was wildly optimistic, since it took a decade for Sioux Falls to number that many inhabitants.

#### THE 1880 CENSUS

Unfortunately, the Sioux Falls newspapers that were published from September 4, 1879, to April 19, 1881, have not survived, so we cannot obtain the journalists' description of Sioux Falls' development during this period. But in June 1880 the tenth federal census was taken in Sioux Falls, and this provides a snapshot of Sioux Falls in the midst of the Dakota boom. The census counted 2,164 inhabitants of the city, of which 1,062 were independent adults. In addition, 311 dependent adults (wives) were listed, making a grand total of 1,373 adults and nearly 800 dependent children residing in the community. It was a heavily male dominated society, with 61 percent of the adult population being men and 39 percent being female. Two-thirds of the 1,062





FIG. 4. *The first hotel in Sioux Falls, the Cataract House, was built in June 1871. It was considered to be the finest place to stay, had the best food, served as the stage stop, and was where all important town meetings took place. Courtesy of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.*

independent adults were single, and only five were black. A mere ten residents, less than 1 percent of the adults, indicated they could not read and write. Thus, statistically, Sioux Falls in 1880 had an adult population that was overwhelmingly male, single, white, and literate.<sup>24</sup>

#### A HOUSING SHORTAGE

The rapid growth of population noted in the newspapers during the two previous years is confirmed by the housing arrangements noted in the census information. The census indicates that only one-third of the independent adults had houses of their own. In other words, two-thirds of the independent adult population was boarding in someone else's house, a hotel, or at their place of work. Specifically, of the 722 boarders, 76 percent (547)

were single adults, 19 percent (137) were domestic servants, and 5 percent (39) had families. This means that 510 boarders were accommodated in the 338 houses in the community while about 200 more were residing in hotels and boardinghouses. Actually, only 124 of the 338 households had boarders, but twenty-two of these houses had four or more boarders. While some of these boarders were probably only passing through, it is clear that the construction of houses was unable to keep up with the rapid population growth of Sioux Falls. The situation described in the newspaper more than a year earlier still applied: "Many residences furnish homes for two, three and even four families."<sup>25</sup>

It is not evident from the census schedule that residences provided homes for several families, but clearly boarders were common in

households and some hosted several. D. F. Smith, listed as a loan broker, is a good example of the latter. The Smith household included his wife, a housekeeper, one son, two servant girls, and nine boarders. Of these boarders four adults were single, one adult was married but not accompanied by his wife, and four were members of the M. N. Gillett family (husband, wife, and two children ages six months and four years). Two years later Smith was still in Sioux Falls, but according to the city directory he was then working at the Queen Bee Mill.<sup>26</sup> Another more typical example would be John McKee, age thirty-three, who was born in Scotland. McKee, a harness maker, along with his wife, daughter, and son, boarded two young men, ages eighteen and nineteen, also listed as harness makers, plus an eleven-year-old girl who was attending school.

Even preachers turned their homes into boardinghouses. The census indicates that Rev. J. W. Marsh and his wife, both born in Illinois, included in their household a twenty-one-year-old daughter and seven other people. The nonfamily members included a housekeeper and her twenty-six-year-old daughter who along with two other single boarders listed their occupation as milliners. The household also contained a twenty-four-year-old servant girl from Germany, and a lawyer and his wife. This household is an interesting mixture of people of different professions and from different parts of the country and world. Four were born in Illinois, three in New York, one in Wisconsin, and one in Germany. When the first city directory appeared in 1882, Marsh had evidently moved on, since he is not included in the list of residents.<sup>27</sup>

### THE BUILDING TRADES

Those in the building trades constituted an important element of the town's population. The railroad made lumber cheaper and more available, but it also made it easier for more people to arrive in Sioux Falls. As a result, residential construction was unable to keep

up with demand; the sound of saw and hammer must have been unrelenting. Given this situation it is not surprising to find that nearly half of the city's population was in skilled or unskilled labor occupations. In the skilled category, which constituted almost a quarter of the independent adult population, 42 percent were in the building trades as carpenters, masons, painters, or plasterers. Indeed, nearly a quarter (23 percent, or 60 of 276) of all skilled workers were listed as carpenters. It is interesting to note that most of the carpenters resided in their own homes rather than boarding with someone else. I. L. Philley, age twenty-four, born in New York and listed as carpenter, was married to Ada, born in Wisconsin, and they had a one-year-old daughter born in Dakota Territory. Benjamin H. Stone, age forty-three, and his wife, Sarah, like Philley also born in New York, had four sons ranging in age from two to fourteen. The two older boys had been born in Wisconsin while the four-year-old was born in New York and the two-year-old had been born in Dakota Territory. A number of the carpenters were foreigners, particularly from Norway, where many had specialized in carpentry as servants on large farms before emigrating to America. An example is Andrew Erickson, age thirty-eight, and his wife, both born in Norway. Erickson is a bit atypical since he had no children, but their household did include a twenty-three-year-old servant girl, also born in Norway. Paul Rotte, twenty-seven, and John Halverson, thirty, both single and born in Norway, were boarding in hotels. Peter Oleson and Christian Oleson, on the other hand, were married, had children, and lived in their own homes. The two Olesons had been in the United States for some time since Peter had a three-year-old son born in Minnesota and a two-year-old daughter born in Nebraska. Christian had a daughter nine years old and a son two years old who had been born in Illinois and a one-year-old born in Dakota Territory. Of all these Norwegian carpenter examples, only Peter Oleson was still residing in Sioux Falls two years later when the first city directory was published.<sup>28</sup>

If we break down the status of those boarding and those providing board, we should not be surprised to find that those who were self-employed or in a profession provided nearly 40 percent of the boarding places. More than half of the boarders (not including the servants) came from the skilled and unskilled labor occupations. The latter were probably the most mobile segment of the community; many undoubtedly were farmers seeking some cash to carry them through to a first crop.

#### DOMESTIC SERVANTS

It should not be a surprise to find that the 1880 federal census listed 137 domestic servants. In nineteenth-century America young women had few options for occupations outside the home. Those who received a better education could teach school, but for most young women old enough to leave home, domestic service was what they did until they were married. Almost a quarter of the households in Sioux Falls had one or more servants, and it is likely that these were households with several children and the means to employ a servant. Not that servants were paid much. Board and room constituted most, if not all, of the domestic servants' remuneration. Only four of the 137 persons who listed their occupation as servant were married, and 95 percent of all servants were women. Interestingly, about half of the domestic servants were American-born and half foreign-born.

While it was typical to have single servant girls listed in a residence, it was also common to have several "servants" listed in hotels and boardinghouses, since in all cases they resided at their place of employment. Harry Corson, for instance, the forty-two-year-old proprietor of the Cataract Hotel, lived on the premises with his wife and daughter, his brother Henry and his wife, together with a cook born in Tennessee and ten servants. These servants, only two of whom were men, ranged in age from seventeen to twenty-six and hailed from Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Norway.

Ethnicity naturally brought servants and their employers together in some instances, such as in Knute Thompson's Thompson House hotel. Thompson, his wife, Rachel, and their three sons ages one, four, and six years old (the older two born in Wisconsin and the youngest in Dakota Territory) employed three servant girls ages seventeen, twenty-three, and thirty, all having Norwegian names even though one of them was born in Wisconsin rather than Norway. Thompson continued to run the Thompson House until near the end of the decade, when he moved entirely into the farm implement business. Ethnicity did not always determine the employment of servant girls. Father John K. Brogan, an Irish-born Catholic priest, employed a housekeeper born in Norway and a servant girl born in Sweden.<sup>29</sup>

#### THE IMMIGRANTS

The founders of Sioux Falls were all Yankees, either born in the northeastern states or one generation removed. By 1880, however, foreign immigrants also constituted an important element of the community. According to the federal census figures, 63 percent of the independent adults in Sioux Falls were American-born, but about half of the independent adults had parents who were both born abroad. In short, it appears that about half of the independent adults were either first- or second-generation immigrants.<sup>30</sup> The American-born were a larger percentage of every occupation group except that of unskilled laborer, and those born in the northeastern part of the United States dominated the business community. But the foreign-born were represented in 20 percent or more of every occupational category. Foreign-born residents, comprising 37 percent of the independent adults, came from a variety of countries, with nearly 4 percent from England, 5 percent from Germany, 5 percent from Sweden, 6 percent from Ireland, and slightly more than 10 percent from Norway. The remaining percentage was either



of unknown origin or came from other countries.

That Norwegians constituted the largest foreign-born group is explained by the fact that a resumption of large-scale Norwegian immigration coincided with the onset of the Dakota boom.<sup>31</sup> While most Norwegian immigrants sought to become landowning farmers, many temporarily or permanently sought opportunities in the frontier urban centers. Norwegians in Sioux Falls, unlike the other foreign-born ethnic groups, were employed across the entire spectrum of occupations, including the professional, self-employed, and public official categories. A. T. Fleetwood, fifty-two and born in Norway, had been serving as postmaster in Sioux Falls for more than a year when the 1880 census was taken and continued in that position for several more years.<sup>32</sup> Two Norwegians, thirty-four-year-old U. Hyerdahl and twenty-nine-year-old Hans Easton, are listed as druggists, and twenty-three-year-old P. A. Havrevold was reading law in a local attorney's office while boarding at the Commercial House hotel.

Norwegians were well represented as business proprietors in 1880 according to the census schedule. Eleven merchants born in Norway ran grocery, dry goods, furniture, drug, and hardware and feed stores or blacksmith and tailor shops or hotels. Most of these Norwegian businessmen had spent some time in the Midwest before coming to Sioux Falls. Edward Larson, a forty-three-year-old tinsmith and dealer in hardware, is a good example. He and his wife were both born in Norway, as were their three oldest children ages eleven to eighteen. But their eight-year-old daughter was born in Rushford, Minnesota, and their three-year-old son was born in Sioux Falls. Birthplace is reflected in the children's names. The three born in Norway are named Christina, Oscar, and Hilda while the three born in the United States are named Maggie, Albert, and George. Larson eventually developed his retail hardware business into a regional wholesale hardware distributorship.<sup>33</sup>

## A YOUNG POPULATION

The census reveals that Sioux Falls had a young population. Nearly 80 percent of the independent adults were younger than forty years of age. Only 8 percent of the independent adults were fifty years old or older, while almost 40 percent were in their twenties. The self-employed adults were the oldest group, though the largest portion of them was younger than fifty. The youngest group in town was the servants, 83 percent (114) of whom were seventeen to twenty-nine years of age. The age distribution of both American- and foreign-born adults was very similar except that there were more American-born in the youngest and oldest age categories.

The age of the population had an obvious impact on the number of children in the community, and this factor caused Sioux Falls to wrestle with the issue of providing adequate education very early in its history. There were nearly 800 dependent children in the community in 1880, which means that children constituted 37 percent of the town's population. One hundred seventy-nine families had a total of 361 school-age children, or an average of about two school-age children per family. The average number of school-age children among the foreign-born population was 2.4 children per family compared to the 1.7 school-age children in the American-born families. Among the foreign-born families with school-age children, the Irish had the highest average number, 2.7, while the Norwegians had the lowest average number, 1.7 school-age children per family. In all, 53 percent of school-age children in Sioux Falls were from American-born families while 47 percent were from foreign-born families. It is clear that the Sioux Falls schools in 1880 were teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) even more than they are today.

While the census indicates that there were 361 school-age children in the community, it also indicates that only 259 (or 72 percent) were actually attending school. These figures



FIG. 5. This view of Sioux Falls appeared in the December 7, 1892, issue of the *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*. It shows the town's rapid growth by the number and size of buildings in the downtown area and its expanding residential neighborhoods. Courtesy of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.

accord with a newspaper report on school enrollment in September 1879, which stated that the term had begun with 220 pupils. Several more students were expected to attend who were "yet employed in various ways by their parents." There were twenty-eight students in grades 7, 8, and high school, while the remainder was in grades 1 through 6.<sup>34</sup> Central School, located on the current site of the Washington Pavilion, was constructed in 1878. It housed most of the school population, but by the fall of 1879 a school was already operating on the east side of the river. Within the next two years, the city was forced to construct more schools as the school-age population continued to increase and residential areas extended farther from the downtown area.

#### THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The federal census also gives us some idea of the role of women in the Sioux Falls community. As indicated above, women constituted only about 40 percent of the adults in the community. Out of the total of 1,373 adults listed in the census, 838 were men, 311 were dependent wives, and 224 were independent women. The 224 independent women constituted only 16 percent of the adult population and more than half of them (130) were employed as domestic servants. The remaining 94 independent women were represented in every occupation category except that of farmer. In the professional category all the women were teachers. The self-employed

women were mainly dressmakers and milliners but also included one hotel keeper and two madams of houses of prostitution. A small number of women clerked in stores, but all that we would term secretaries were men. Those women categorized as being in skilled occupations were cooks, bakers, or prostitutes,<sup>35</sup> while some women were in unskilled occupations like hotel maid. Clearly, Sioux Falls reflected the mores of late-nineteenth-century America in terms of the roles open to women outside the home.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that Sioux Falls shared fully in the early years of the Dakota boom and probably reflected the characteristics of many other frontier communities in the Northern Plains that experienced rapid growth. The last years of the 1870s were good years in the nation and in Dakota Territory. The economic depression, drought, and grasshoppers that had all but stopped immigration to Dakota and adjacent areas in the early and mid-1870s had ended. The economy was strong and expansive, and in Dakota Territory the rain came each year and the grasshoppers did not. Railroad access to southeastern Dakota and the Homestead Act worked together to bring the people. They came from New York, Pennsylvania, New England, and the states of the Old Northwest such as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, from the newer midwestern states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, and from Scandinavia and western Europe. People came faster than houses could be built to accommodate them, and business buildings were thrown up as quickly as lumber and labor could be procured. Sioux Falls, a young, white, and predominately male community in 1880, was not yet a stable community. Many of those people listed as residents in 1880 were gone when the first city directory was compiled two years later, having moved on to other Dakota towns or to take up land to farm.<sup>36</sup> But the people kept coming to Sioux Falls during the 1880s, even when toward

the end of the decade the rain again became undependable, and the 1890 federal census revealed that the town had become a city of 10,177 residents. Was Sioux Falls a typical frontier town? In most respects the answer is yes. Its leadership group was mainly from the older American states, it was predominately male, single, overwhelmingly white, and it contained a large immigrant population. And, yes, it did have bordellos and plenty of saloons.

## NOTES

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3. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1878.

4. *Ibid.*, December 12, 1877.

5. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1878.

6. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1878.

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9. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1878.

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11. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, July 24, 1878.

12. *Ibid.*, July 31, 1878.

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14. *Ibid.*, August 7, 1878.

15. *Chicago Commercial Advertiser*, August 12, 1878.

16. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, August 25, 1878.

17. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1878.

18. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1879.

19. *Ibid.*, January 8, 1879.

20. *Ibid.*, March 26, 1879.

21. Dana R. Bailey, *History of Minnehaha County, South Dakota* (Sioux Falls: Brown and Saenger, 1899), 150.

22. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, June 4, 1879.

23. *Ibid.*, July 26, 1879.



24. All the statistical data contained in the remainder of this paper are derived from the handwritten schedules of the Tenth Federal Census for Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, US Bureau of the Census, microfilm copy.

25. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, January 1, 1879.

26. Tenth Census for Sioux Falls; Glenn and Cox, *General City Directory of Sioux Falls, Dakota, 1882-1883* (Sioux Falls: Sioux Falls Publishing Co., 1882), 87.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, 73.

29. *Ibid.*, 91; *Sioux Falls City Directory* (Sioux Falls: Chas. Pettibone and Co. Publishers, 1889), 197.

30. It must be noted that for 138 entries the census did not include parents' place of birth.

31. The high point of Norwegian immigration came in 1882 when nearly 29,000 Norwegians entered the US, and Norway experienced a net population loss.

32. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, February 6, 1879; *General City Directory of Sioux Falls (1882-83)*, 34.

33. Bailey, *History of Minnehaha County*, 600.

34. *Sioux Falls Pantagraph*, September 3, 1879.

35. The census listed the occupation of eight women as "prostitute."

36. *General City Directory of Sioux Falls (1882-83)*, passim.

# BUT WHAT IS THERE TO SEE?

## AN EXPLORATION OF A GREAT PLAINS AESTHETIC

SHAUNANNE TANGNEY

In the fall of 2001 I taught a beginning college composition course at Minot State University, a small state university located in the northwestern quadrant of North Dakota. It is typical of such courses to include a fair amount of reading, and one of the texts I assigned was Ian Frazier's *Great Plains*. The book is a travelogue that Frazier wrote while living in and traveling throughout the Great Plains. It is written in a direct and inviting style and provides insight about the very place in which the students and I were living. I thought students would

take to it like the proverbial duck to water, so I was shocked when just the opposite happened. The students hated the book.

"It's boring!" they complained.

"What do you mean, it's boring?" I asked.

"It's all about . . . well, *here*," they replied, "and it's boring here."

I tried for *days* to get the students to see what Frazier saw in the Great Plains, but they just could not or perhaps would not; it doesn't matter. As far as they were concerned, this place in which we live is boring.

I was terribly dismayed by this experience, but I shouldn't have been surprised. People—myself included—have long misinterpreted the Great Plains. When I first moved to North Dakota in the fall of 1997, this place seemed alien indeed to me. It wasn't just that it was big and flat: I had grown up at the edge of the Great Central Valley in California and I knew big and flat very well. For me, it was the lack of mountains on the horizon. I was (and to a degree still am) perpetually disoriented. I had no landmarks to reinforce the compass points, and I often felt exposed, a feeling that resonated on both physical and psychological levels. This is nothing new.

KEY WORDS: environment, landscape, Luce Irigaray, place, settlers

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But my students (for the most part) weren't newcomers. They were natives. Many of their families had been here for generations. Why did they have such negative reactions to the place in which they lived, the place to which they were native? It was easy to ferret out the issues of rural, small town, and remote life everywhere: there's nothing to do on the weekend, schools that are small and unsophisticated, no good jobs await those who do finish school, and so on. It wasn't just those facts that made the place boring; to my students the land, the landscape, the physical place itself was boring. One student said, "You know—that drive from here to Bismarck—it's just flat, dull, and full of nothing." I was actually unable to respond for a moment. I had recently made that drive and was remembering what I had seen: acres of fields, the most delicate yellow in color, powdered-sugared with snow, and topped by a sky aching and perfectly blue; an enormous flock of snow geese, a flock so large that I had to stop and marvel at them, and when I did the noise they made was as enormous as their number; the digger at the Falkirk mine, a mechanical amazement; a bald eagle in a tree along the Missouri River, that rare and majestic bird watching over the river that changed the course of the nation's history. When I reported these sights from my recent trip, the students just shrugged. Either these things didn't mean anything to them or, perhaps more frighteningly, they just couldn't see them.

I want to explore how people *see* the Great Plains. Following that exploration, I will suggest a proper aesthetic for the Great Plains, one that might lead to a revaluation of that landscape. I am not alone in suggesting that the lack of a proper aesthetic for the Great Plains is due to a failure of vision. In "The Midwest and the Great Plains," Diane Dufva Quantic suggests that in the Great Plains

the individual must come to terms with a seemingly undifferentiated landscape that can empower one with a sense of limitless opportunity and leave another with a profound

feeling of psychological erasure. As Robert Thacker points out in his study, *The Great Prairie Fact and Literary Imagination*, in a place with no familiar geographical features, men and women had to learn to *see* the Great Plains.<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear, however, that men and women have yet learned to see the Great Plains. Ian Frazier expresses a similar concern:

I fear for the Great Plains because many people think they are boring.

... The view of the Great Plains from an airplane window is hardly more detailed than the view from a car on the interstate highways, which seem designed to get across in the least time possible, as if this were an awkward point in a conversation. In the minds of many, natural beauty means something that looks like Switzerland. The ecology movement often works best in behalf of winsome landscapes and wildlife. The Great Plains do not ingratiate. They seldom photograph well—or rather, they are seldom photographed. Images of the Great Plains are not a popular feature of postcards or scenic calendars.<sup>2</sup>

Here Frazier implies the spectacular, and it is my argument that the Great Plains is misinterpreted, and therefore misunderstood, because we see plains as not spectacular. Tall mountains, deep forests, and teeming wildlife are considered spectacular, and the spectacular is considered valuable. The spectacular is by definition something that is striking, amazing, or lavish. It is easy, then, to understand why we consider mountains, forests, and wildlife spectacular. But it is not easy to understand why we don't see the Great Plains as spectacular. Simply in terms of open space, the Great Plains is certainly striking, amazing, and lavish. One answer may lie in the etymology of the word spectacular. "Spectacular" derives from "spectate," which means to look or gaze. Whether or not something is spectacular, then, is directly connected to how we



see it. It's not that the Great Plains in and of itself is not spectacular; rather, it is that we are incapable of seeing it as such.

We are incapable because we emphasize what I will call the vertical spectacular: we only value the kind of landscape that has tall trees and high mountains. My idea of the vertical spectacular is derived from the work of feminist and psychoanalytic theorist Luce Irigaray, most specifically her idea of the male spectacular gaze, which is developed in *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Irigaray argues that when a male looks upon a female (when he gazes or speculates upon her) he sees only a void, a blank, a nothing. This nothing is a pun on "no thing": because the female has no penis, the male can see in her neither himself nor his desires and values, therefore she is nothing. Likewise, I argue, a landscape that lacks the vertical spectacular (or, as Irigaray might suggest, phallic geography) is seen as nothing. In other words, we subject the Great Plains to a gaze (akin to Irigaray's male spectacular gaze) that renders them as nothing. Both the vertical spectacular and the male spectacular gaze, then, are ways of seeing that objectify and denigrate that which is viewed. Irigaray constructs the theory of the male spectacular gaze to address the fact that women have long been considered "less than" men. Following her lead, I have constructed the idea of the vertical spectacular to address the fact that the Great Plains has long been considered "less than" other American landscapes.

To begin, let me simply present a collection of written evidence of how people see the Great Plains. I will use evidence in writing from explorers, settlers, and literary figures. I will also include commentary from contemporary scholars of landscape, place, and environment. This commentary will help to weave together the descriptions of and reactions to the Great Plains made by explorers, settlers, and literary writers, and my idea of the vertical spectacular.

As for the explorers, we can start at the very beginning of European contact: Robert Thacker tells us that "the first European who

traveled on the Great Plains was Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a Spaniard who lost his way as he wandered through the southern plains about 1534. . . . [H]e later complained, 'We nowhere saw mountains.'<sup>3</sup> Thacker also makes note of the Stephen H. Long expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1819 and 1820. Edwin James, a member of the party,

recorded details that articulate the experience of overland plains travel. Thus he writes of the landscape's effect on the imagination: "The great extent of country contemplated at a single view, and the unvaried sameness of the surface, made our prospect seem tedious." . . . Referring to the same phenomenon later, James wrote that he and his party felt "grossly abused by [their] eyesight."<sup>4</sup>

In the two accounts of Plains exploration, mountains—or the lack thereof—are crucial. For Cabeza de Vaca, the lack of mountains confounds his ability to navigate the landscape. It also devalued the landscape in his mind. For the Long party, mountains were the objective, and the Great Plains merely something to suffer through. In contending that the Great Plains "grossly abused [their] eyesight," James does not mean that traveling across the Great Plains did physical damage to their eyes; rather, he means that the endless horizontality of the Great Plains was troubling to them, coming as they did from the eastern US with its landscape of trees and mountains.

Paul Witkowski accuses "the eastern mind" of reducing "the complex ecosystem of the Great Plains to negative space: in simple terms, a forest with the trees missing."<sup>5</sup> The idea of "negative space" is important. Early explorers and contemporary writers alike tend to see the Great Plains as a negative—empty, void, nothing. We can still see that negativity in the "ironic boosterism" of billboards that read "Welcome to North Dakota—Mountain Removal Project Completed." It seems clear, if unfortunate, that the "eastern mind" is still at work in the Great Plains.

In response, A. Carl Bredahl Jr. calls for the development of a "western mind." The "eastern mind" is comfortable with enclosure and verticality and is "fundamentally distrustful of space."<sup>6</sup> In the vast, open, horizontal space of the Great Plains such an imagination is useless if not dangerous, as Bredahl states: "Confronting an environment of extravagant size, weather, and configuration, the western imagination had finally to discard assumptions of imposing self and enclosing landscape, efforts that in the West met inevitably with disaster."<sup>7</sup> Quantic also points out the eastern mind at work in many of the early settlers of the Great Plains:

Walter M. Kollmorgen has suggested that the large farms and ranches that are better suited to the ecology of the high plains were slow to develop because of "inept land alienation laws," advocated by an Eastern "woodsman" mentality. . . . Settlers were unwilling or unable to approach the land on its own terms.

. . . Settlers who crossed Kansas and Nebraska on their way to Oregon and California carried with them a mental picture of rich forests or instant riches, nurtured by the myth of manifest destiny.<sup>8</sup>

Here again is evidence of the eastern mind that valued most those landscapes containing the vertical spectacular: mountains and trees. The failure of settlers to approach the land on its own terms is a failure of vision as much as anything—and I do not mean of agricultural or economic vision, but of actual vision: it is a failure to see with anything other than eastern eyes, eyes that are trained for the vertical spectacular. When describing the Northern Plains, explorer Sir William Francis Butler complains that

at a single glance the eye is satiated with immensity. There is no mountain range to come across the middle distance, no dark forest to give shade to foreground or fringe perspective, no speck of life, no track of man, nothing but wilderness.<sup>9</sup>

Butler uses the terminology of landscape painting—middle distance, foreground—but can't really deal with the view of the landscape itself. His eye longs for mountains and trees, and because they are unavailable to him out on the plains, he cannot judge the landscape as anything but wanting; it is *nothing* but wilderness.

The notion that without trees or mountains—that is, without the vertical spectacular—the Great Plains is negative space continues to present itself in the literature that settlers left behind. "It may enchant the imagination for a moment to look over the prairies and plains as far as the eye can reach," Sarah Raymond wrote in her diary in 1865. "Still such a view is tedious and monotonous. It can no wise produce that rapturing delight, that pleasing variety of the sublime and beauty of landscape scenery that mountains afford."<sup>10</sup> According to Raymond, the plains are tedious and monotonous because they do not achieve the sublime. The sublime is a key idea here, and perhaps why so many early settlers and explorers failed to describe or appreciate the Great Plains fully or well. As Quantic argues, "Most of the earliest travelers had no vocabulary to describe the unfamiliar landscape and thus relied on inept similes and euphuistic clichés."<sup>11</sup> Those inept similes and clichés come from the Romantic vocabulary already developed to describe nature or landscape as sublime.

When people of European descent first began crossing the American continent, they brought with them their ingrained notions of landscape appreciation, derived from the Romantic movement in literature, philosophy, and art. Preceding the Romantic ideal was the European tradition of the picturesque, in which nature was artfully designed so that it could be read like a picture, with clearly defined near, middle, and far distance. It is out of this tradition that we get the precisely designed gardens of the castles of Europe. On the wild and immense American continent, the picturesque was hardly applicable, and so American philosophers and aestheticians began to employ

the notion of the sublime. The sublime is actually a feeling, a sense of awe or thrilling fear, provoked by a natural scene or object. This awe, this thrilling fear, was linked to God, determined to be God's presence in nature, and therefore in America.

Writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson in the East and John Muir in the West valorized the sublime in the extreme. In "Nature," Emerson tells us that "in the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows."<sup>12</sup> He also says that when he goes into the woods he "enjoy[s] a perfect exhilaration. [He is] glad to the brink of fear."<sup>13</sup> Emerson equates the natural and the sublime, for it is nature and nothing but nature that evokes in him the feelings that denote the sublime. Indeed, for Emerson, in nature "the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God."<sup>14</sup> Nature and the sublime are not only delightful and exhilarating, they are the locus of God, and therefore of truth and being, for God guarantees both abstractions.

In the West, John Muir finds landscapes that allow him to advocate the sublime at a fever pitch. In *My First Summer in the Sierra*, he writes of the granite mountains that ring the Yosemite Valley:

No pain here, no dull empty hours, no fear of the past, no fear of the future. These blessed mountains are so complacently filled with God's beauty, no petty personal hope or experience has room to be. Drinking these champagne waters is pure pleasure, so is breathing the living air, and every movement of limbs is pleasure, while the whole body seems to feel beauty when exposed to it as it feels the campfire or sunshine, entering not only by the eyes alone, but equally through all one's flesh like radiant heat, making a passionate ecstatic pleasure-glow not explainable.<sup>15</sup>

Muir's language is as wild and as uncontainable as the far western landscape was when Muir first encountered it, and this wildness and this

exuberance of landscape work well with the sublime. Mountains become cathedrals for Muir, and he finds his God therein. Like Emerson's woods, Muir's mountains evoke the sublime, and therefore guarantee God. One final point is important concerning our understanding of the sublime. As the work of Emerson and Muir demonstrates, the sublime is directly connected to the vertical spectacular. For them, things like deep forests full of tall trees, or dramatic valleys ringed with rangy mountains, are the objects that most evoke the sublime.

Those who crossed or settled the Great Plains were faced with a landscape that could hardly be called sublime. It did not give them a thrilling sense of awe or fear, but left them feeling terrified and speechless. Nevertheless, the idea of the sublime persisted, and the strangest thing happened. Travelers, explorers, and settlers in the Great Plains realized almost immediately that the language of the sublime was inadequate for the Great Plains, but rather than find or make a new aesthetic language, those travelers, explorers, and settlers kept the language and evaluative standards of the sublime and saw the Great Plains as a place that failed to measure up. The region was therefore seen as void, a place to be crossed as quickly as possible in order to get to Oregon or California, places they saw as evocative of the sublime. This is evident in the words of mid-nineteenth-century settler Clarina Nicols, who writes that in the Great Plains, "[I]t seems as though nature had gone on a long journey' taking her 'treasures' with her."<sup>16</sup> Without those hallmarks of the sublime, tall trees and high mountains, the Great Plains has nothing to treasure.

Unfortunately, this inappropriate aesthetic continues well into the twentieth century. Cary W. deWit's intriguing study of latter-day immigrants to the Great Plains, "Women's Sense of Place on the American High Plains," presents twentieth century voices that echo earlier ones; "a western Kansas woman originally from Kansas City recounted, 'When I first came here, I felt really vulnerable because there



were no trees. I would drive down to Garden City, get under those trees, and say, "Whew, safe at last!"'" Another woman in Dewit's study, originally from Colorado, bemoans the lack of mountains—which she indicates as "scenery"—on the Great Plains: "I like scenery. I like to see things. There's no scenery here, nothing to look at. We were driving to Garden City. I look out and tell my husband, 'There's nothing. How did the Indians hide from anything? There's no place to hide!'"<sup>17</sup> Fiction presents scenarios that are eerily similar. O. E. Rölvaag's 1927 tome, *Giants in the Earth*, ostensibly a story of Scandinavian settlement of the Northern Plains, is also the story of a family driven to madness and suicide by the land itself. Rölvaag is a just storyteller, because many people did go mad in the Great Plains; however, his narrative always blames the land, as we can see in Beret's early impression of the prairie: "Had they traveled into some nameless, abandoned region? Could no living thing exist out here, in the empty, desolate, endless wastes of green and blue? . . . If life is to thrive and endure, it must at least have something to hide behind!"<sup>18</sup> As in the writing of actual explorers, pioneers, and immigrants, Beret bemoans the lack of the vertical on the plains—no tree or mountain to hide behind. It is intriguing how they all assume verticality to be essential to life, and equally intriguing is that they cannot see the abundant life that does in fact exist in the Great Plains. Because there is no verticality, the Great Plains are for actual and fictional immigrants denied even basic existence; they are a non-place.

From Cabeza de Vaca's travelogue to the journals of nineteenth-century settlers, to Rölvaag's twentieth-century literary version of settlement, we see immigrants struggling to understand and describe the Great Plains. It is a struggle that leaves us with an inappropriate aesthetic for the Great Plains. In an article about Canadian pioneers in the Great Plains, Ronald Rees writes, "Time alone may loosen attachments to the homeland but as long as the new land is filtered through the forms of

the old culture it can never be home. To feel at home, emigrants, or their descendants, must acquire new ways of seeing."<sup>19</sup> The notion of a new way of seeing is crucial to a proper Great Plains aesthetic. I have shown that using an "old way" of seeing—an emphasis on the sublime as captured in the vertical spectacular so applicable to eastern forests and western mountains—is not only an improper but also a dangerous way of seeing the Great Plains. I have yet to propose a new way of seeing, however. In order to do so, I will now turn my attention in full to Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*.

As stated earlier, Irigaray's feminist theories are concerned that the female is presented as nothing(ness); or, as Raman Selden puts it, the female is "not viewed as existing at all except as a negative mirror image of [the male]." This strikes me as amazingly similar to the imposition of the vertical spectacular upon the Great Plains. Doing so makes the Great Plains only a negative mirror image of the wooded East or the mountainous Far West. Because they deal with issues of lack and speculation, then, Irigaray's theories can have a great impact on formulating a workable and meaningful aesthetic for the Great Plains.

In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray presents a series of short vignettes in which she leads us through her theories about lack and speculation. She begins by telling us:

Now the . . . woman supposedly has *nothing* you can see. She exposes, exhibits the possibility of *a nothing to see*. Or at any rate she shows nothing that is penis-shaped or could substitute for a penis. This is the odd, the uncanny thing, as far as the eye can see, this nothing around which lingers in horror, now and forever, an overcathexis of the eye, of appropriation by the gaze.<sup>20</sup>

We can see several ideas at work in this observation. First of all, there is the male spectacular gaze, that when it looks wants only to see itself (i.e., the phallic) reflected. When it sees nothing phallic, it sees simply nothing. In terms of a

Great Plains aesthetic, we can easily understand trees and mountains as phallic, and we can just as easily note a kind of male spectacular gaze that has been imposed upon the Great Plains for centuries. This is a gaze—or an aesthetic—that says, because the Great Plains is treeless and without mountains, it is nothing.

The phrase “as far as the eye can see, this nothing around which lingers in horror, now and forever,” is exactly the kind of language writers have used for generations to describe the Great Plains. But, as Irigaray asks, “[W]hy this fear, horror, phobia . . . felt when there is nothing to be seen, why does having nothing that can be seen threaten his libidinal economy?”<sup>21</sup> Many people, myself included, can report that being out in the Great Plains, in the midst of so much space, is psychologically daunting. But merely to testify to this is not to explain it. Irigaray explains that the male spectacular gaze is predicated on the female

having nothing penile, in seeing that she has No Thing. Nothing *like* man. That is to say, *no sex/organ* that can be seen in a *form* capable of founding its reality, reproducing its truth. *Nothing to be seen is equivalent to having no thing. No being and no truth.*<sup>22</sup>

The first part of the observation we have already explored—the lack of the phallic means there is nothing to see. The second part of the view gives us something new and difficult to consider. The lack of anything phallic, under the male spectacular gaze, implies that women have no being and no truth. Likewise, the lack of anything vertical in the Great Plains implies that it has no being and no truth. Because the Great Plains is a non-phallic landscape, it is seen as a non-place; it is merely something to get across, as quickly as possible, in order to arrive at the phallic, the vertical spectacular landscapes of forests and mountains.

Irigaray's theories also show up the deceptively simple notion of woman as other, and while multicultural curricula and diversity

programs seem to embrace the notion of the other, others and/or otherness remain pejorative in word and in being. Irigaray reminds us that “sexual ‘otherness’ comes down to ‘not having it.’”<sup>23</sup> In the simplest of terms, this statement tells us that not having a penis automatically “others” women. And, simply, because the Great Plains doesn't have a phallic landscape, doesn't conform to the vertical sublime, it is automatically “othered,” too. On a more complex level, however, we can approach a discussion of the function of the negative. If we only see “otherness” in terms of negativity (not having it) then otherness will never be valued, will always be marginalized. Otherness must be recognized on its own terms and must have its own aspects foregrounded and valued. I have argued that the Great Plains has been othered by the vertical spectacular, but if we cease to see the Great Plains as lacking verticality, and learn to embrace its horizontality, we might indeed make literature and art that does not fight the very place we are trying to describe, represent, and honor.

Irigaray also recognizes the importance of a new vision when she reminds us that “a detour into *strategy, tactics, and practice* is called for, at least as long as it takes to gain vision, self-knowledge, self-possession, even in one's decenteredness.”<sup>24</sup> The complicated idea of decentering is crucial to formulating an appropriate aesthetic for the Great Plains. In order to wend my way into decentering, I want to explore some of the work done on Great Plains landscapes by Neil Evernden, especially in his article “Beauty and Nothingness: Prairie as Failed Resource.” Despite the rather gloomy title, the article provides the groundwork for a legitimate prairie aesthetic. Evernden uses a clever mix of statistical analysis and the history of landscape painting to make some interesting proposals. Initially, Evernden presents statistical evidence that demonstrates that viewers of prairie landscapes “[rule] prairie beauty nonexistent.”<sup>25</sup> They make such a ruling because of “the central feature of the landscape, the absence of things. . . . Nothing is there, no things to

measure or enjoy.”<sup>26</sup> These findings are strikingly similar to my own argument that we do not value the Great Plains landscape because it lacks the vertical spectacular. Evernden then moves on to a history of landscape painting in which he asserts that around the time of the Renaissance, painters began to include nature in their paintings as a central part of the composition; this happened, Evernden argues, “as a consequence of a new way of seeing.”<sup>27</sup> This new way of seeing may sound like a step in the right direction, especially in connection with my own argument, but it isn’t exactly so.

What happened was that landscape painting became dependent upon what I will call “beautiful sites”: places chock-full of things—like tall trees and high mountains and rushing cataracts—that exemplify the vertical spectacular. Clearly not the Great Plains. The dependence upon beautiful sites created, according to Evernden, the following problem: “[I]f you are charged with determining which *sites* are beautiful, not which *ways* each site may be beautiful or interesting, then the only features you can assess are those that are permanent. You can only measure things.”<sup>28</sup> Measuring things is an inappropriate aesthetic for the Great Plains, for it is a landscape largely devoid of things, or at least immediately visible things like tall trees and high mountains. The new way of seeing we need now is in the latter part of Evernden’s statement: discovering the *ways* in which individual sites are beautiful, which is admittedly difficult, as Evernden points out: “[O]ur obsession with things seems so natural that we find it nearly impossible to imagine thinking about experience instead.”<sup>29</sup> “Seems” is the key word in Evernden’s assertion; our obsession with things *seems* natural. The theory of social construction suggests otherwise—that there are no natural behaviors, only learned ones.

Following that lead, eschewing the fallacy of natural behavior and embracing the notion of learned behavior, we must turn our focus toward experience and learn to discuss the Great Plains in terms of experience, not in terms of things. Evernden says that

some of us *know* that a profound esthetic experience may occur when in an encounter with the prairie. Perhaps we could say that the prairie is subversive. It puts us out of register with societal biases and makes us question our definitions of beauty, esthetic experience, and even nature. The prairie forces upon us the realization that as individuals we inhabit a world of irrational, experiential value.<sup>30</sup>

It intrigues me that Evernden calls the prairie itself “subversive.” The subversive is that which challenges—even attempts to eliminate—the status quo. If the status quo is an aesthetic that reinforces the vertical spectacular, then the prairies themselves may be that which will ultimately overcome that aesthetic. Evernden says the prairies make us question our definitions of beauty and aesthetic experience, which is exactly in line with my assertion that we must eschew the vertical spectacular for a horizontal spectacular. This is, no doubt, an unfamiliar aesthetic, an atypical way of seeing. But, as Evernden suggests, we do have the capacity to grasp it.

Evernden writes at length about the relationship between sky and land.<sup>31</sup> We already accept the sky as the horizontal spectacular, and we do so not “because of its solid parts, [but] because of a passing quality of clouds and light.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, we have an existing aesthetic for the shape and qualities of the Great Plains; we must learn to apply it to the Great Plains. An aesthetic learned from the sky is applicable indeed to the Great Plains, for perhaps nowhere on earth is the sky already as much a part of the landscape as it is in the Great Plains. Evernden uses a passage from Wallace Stegner to illustrate this fact:

The drama of this landscape is in the sky, pouring with light and always moving. The earth is passive. And yet the beauty I am struck by, both as present fact and as revived memory, is a fusion: this sky would not be so spectacular without this earth to change and glow and darken under it.<sup>33</sup>



Note that Stegner uses the word spectacular. In the Great Plains we do indeed have a spectacular view: the horizontal spectacular. That is the grammar of the Great Plains, and we are foolish to keep trying to impose the vertical spectacular upon it. Evernden says it best, I think, when he reminds us that

the prairie is never really a thing or even a group of things. This absence leaves us with nothing to stand against, nothing to be a subject toward. . . . We can only accept the green onslaught of prairie, the sterilizing light, the desiccation of hubris. Exposed on the prairie, we lose any sense of mastery, for what is there to master? The sun on the head bleaches the ego, and we experience the flattening and self-extension that is the essence of the prairie. Self is not concentrated in a pinnacle of subjectivity, but diffused throughout a haze of being. The prairie is an experience, not an object—a sensation, not a view. The prairie is a way of being and not a thing at all.<sup>34</sup>

Evernden, like Irigaray, turns the neat trick of making a new way of seeing into a new way of being. Two centuries of viewing the Great Plains through an improper aesthetic has made the Great Plains, to borrow from Evernden, a failed landscape. But the landscape cannot fail; only we can fail in our interpretations of, our use of, and our ways of being in a landscape. Just as the sublime functions in a vertical spectacular landscape to ensure God and therefore our being, if we learn to see—and to value—the horizontal spectacular, we can find, as Evernden suggests, a way of being crucial to life in the Great Plains.

I am also an immigrant to the Great Plains. I have lived here for nearly seven years, after more than a decade of traveling the United States pursuing various college degrees. After only seven years I am beginning to claim myself as one of the plains people, and I think that I can testify that we plains people are what we do not want to be. We are bored. We

are poor. We are overlooked, forgotten even, by the rest of the nation. We are cruelly romanced as the last pioneers. But how could we be anything else, when our very sense of place is imposed upon us from without? From the Homestead Act of 1862, which followed an eastern model of farming entirely inappropriate to the West, to a vertical spectacular aesthetic, likewise imported from the East and reinforced by the Far West, we have allowed an outside ignorance to determine our ways of inhabiting and appreciating our landscape. Let me reiterate that *we have allowed* others to make us what we don't want to be. It may be true, as Kathleen Norris says in *Dakota*, that "without a strong sense of identity, we become a mythic void,"<sup>35</sup> but we have done little to make our own sense of identity and are instead all too willing to accept that which is imposed upon us from without.

I explored the above assertion in an introduction to literature course that I taught in the fall of 2003 at Minot State University. In the course we read texts from several genres, nations, and historical periods. Rather than set a theme, I tend to choose texts in which place is a central concern, as it is such a big part of my own research. It seemed only natural, then, to end with Norris's *Dakota*. Plus, I wanted to explore again what young people, native to the Great Plains, would say and do when faced with a deep and thoughtful consideration of that place. Fortuitously, we read *Dakota* over Thanksgiving break, and so I asked the students to write about the place they call home. I asked them to pay special attention to the physical place, and not so much the town they come from. Their responses were unfortunately predictable. They called it "flat and desolate," a "barren wasteland," and "bland and boring." A young woman who had lived here for only two years talked about how much she misses trees. A young man who claimed to love living in the upper Great Plains still described them as "extremely bland and boring," and talked about how, driving from Minot to his hometown west of there, the most notable

sights were "the missile silos . . . , the New Town bridge . . . , and the oil wells." Whenever the students tried to deal with the flatness and openness of the Great Plains, they resorted to adjectives such as "desolate," "barren," and "boring." Outsiders still yearn for the verticality of trees, and even life-long natives can only pick out the vertical on the plains: the missile silos, the spires of the bridge, and the oil wells.

I next asked them to write about a beautiful place. I said it could be a real place that they had been to, or it could be an imaginary place, just as long as it was the perfect example of beauty. I was employing a little subterfuge with this assignment: I wanted to find out what aesthetic they had been trained in—and sure enough, it was that of the vertical spectacular. One student chose Montana and another Alaska as the most beautiful place, and both descriptions were replete with trees and mountains. Three students actually wrote about places in North Dakota. One wrote about her backyard, discussing how her "parents spent hour after hour, hand planting every single one of our 100+ trees"; another described the experience of looking out her windows at home and "watching the snow lightly fall while covering the evergreens (the gigantic green trees reaching for the sky)"; and a third simply came right out and said it: "Being from North Dakota, one of the most beautiful things to me is a tree." It seems eminently clear that these young people—most of them natives of the Great Plains—try as hard as all their predecessors did to impose the aesthetic of the vertical spectacular on a landscape that simply cannot tolerate it. They cannot see—perhaps because they have not been taught to see—the Great Plains as they are: a horizontally spectacular landscape.

The next time we met, I brought in a version of this article and shared with them my idea of a horizontal spectacular. They were less than convinced. They remained unconvinced even when I had them turn to the passage in *Dakota* wherein Norris makes an

argument similar to mine. The flatness of the Dakotas, she writes, challenges

the eye that appreciates the vertical definition of mountains of skyscrapers; that defines beauty in terms of the spectacular or the busy: hills, trees, buildings, highways, people. We seem empty by comparison. Here, the eye learns to appreciate slight variations, the possibilities of inherent emptiness.<sup>36</sup>

The eye learns, Norris says, and perhaps, despite their initial shrugs and silence, my students will learn, too. Perhaps the one student willing to proclaim his love for rural North Dakota will remember the idea of the horizontal spectacular and find a way to truly describe what it is he sees, and loves. Perhaps the students drawn to Alaska and Montana will be able to maintain their appreciation of mountains and trees, and add to it an appreciation of the plains generously reaching out to meet a sky that is not abstract and void, but an embrace of blue. I believe that learning the aesthetic of the horizontal spectacular along with that of the vertical spectacular is of great importance for plains people. If not, I fear we will never be able to determine our own sense of place, and have to forever defend the Great Plains, as Norris did (indeed, taking all of *Dakota* to do it) when a friend from New York asked, "But what is there to see?"

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# THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF CANADIAN STUDIES



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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism.* By Devon Abbott Mihesuah. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xxii + 246 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

Devon Mihesuah has written a powerful book about the impact of colonization on the indigenous peoples of North America, especially indigenous women. Never losing sight of the enormous diversity of indigenous America, she nevertheless draws out commonalities—the centrality of women to indigenous religions, economies, and decision-making; the deleterious effects of European invasion; the efforts of indigenous women (and men) to revitalize their cultures; the social and individual healing that comes through tribalism and activism. The essays do not comprise a narrative history but instead develop interrelated themes in three parts—“Research and Writing,” “Colonialism and Native Women,” and “Activists and Feminists.” Trained as a historian, Mihesuah provides a useful overview of the past in “Colonialism and Disempowerment,” which concludes with examples, such as domestic abuse and the power of stereotypes, that link the history of European oppression to modern social issues. In an essay on the Cherokee Female Seminary, she explores both the internalization of European racial and gender norms and the creation of a strong sense of tribal identity among students, suggesting that the effects of colonialism are remarkably complex.

More than a mere chronicle of oppression, however, Mihesuah’s essays primarily present a plan of action. Her command of the literature on Native Americans or indigenous peoples, the term she prefers, is cross-disciplinary and compelling. She also draws on an even broader literature, particularly that on colonialism and on African Americans. Recognizing the important differences between African Americans and indigenous peoples, especially those stemming from the sovereign rights of tribes, she nevertheless draws useful analogies in forging a course of action for personal healing and community activism. While many of the essays focus on what indigenous people can—must—do for themselves, she also turns her attention to that bane of many Native communities, the academic researcher who is likely to be non-Indian. Once again, she offers concrete guidelines for ethical research, the nuts and bolts of which unfortunately appear in the notes, and she raises important issues about the merging of feminist studies and indigenous women’s studies. These essays should be required reading in every research seminar.

While many of these essays have been published previously or are revised versions of such, their collection in a single volume is useful to Indian and non-Indian academics. And they clearly establish Mihesuah as a leading indigenous intellectual.

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*One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark.* By Colin G. Calloway. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xvii + 631 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

This is the first of a projected six-volume "History of the American West" to be published by the University of Nebraska Press and edited by Richard W. Etulain, a specialist in the history and literature of the West. Scholarly and soundly documented, *One Vast Winter Count* is a well-written and easily read narrative of the interrelated events that give substance and meaning to the story of the western United States from prehistory to 1800 C.E.

It is perhaps as difficult for a single individual to review this book as it was to have written it, for the canvas is both broad and detailed. The narrative begins with what we know of the arrival of Native Americans in this hemisphere, and includes "the area between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, the territory that constituted 'the West' for generations of colonial Anglo-Americans." Calloway has given us a somewhat patchwork history of the West and Midwest, heavily focused on the Southern Plains and American Southwest. California and the Great Basin are the least-covered areas of concern to the story. But the story adheres.

Calloway's narrative provides in-depth studies of crucial regions and topics, reflecting recent scholarship on complex and often debated issues. It is current and delves deeply into both place and process, revising our outlook as well as exposing the dark side of western history. The West is a complex area, both physiographically and historically, and Calloway brings these disparate components together in a story the general reader and scholar alike will enjoy. The volume should also serve equally well as a college text.

Calloway succeeds in making the point that the story of the West after the arrival of Europeans is a very short one. Earlier and complex prehistoric Native American societies—

Hopewell, Mississippian, Caddoan, and Ancestral Puebloan cultures—have risen and vanished in the midcontinent. The European-American "phase," "gauged against the long span of human history in the West . . . is still a baby; its chances of surviving its infancy are not good. Automobiles and oil may not be that different from horses and buffalo." Calloway concludes by warning that "In many ways a historian is the slave in the chariot—the one who warns the leader, and the rest of us, of the transient and cyclical nature of human affairs.

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*The Lewis and Clark Journals: An American Epic of Discovery (The Abridgment of the Definitive Nebraska Edition).* By Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Members of the Corps of Discovery. Edited and with an introduction by Gary E. Moulton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Lincoln, 2003. lviii + 413 pp. Illustrations, maps, index. \$29.95.

I am an avid and eclectic reader because I enjoy reading and always have. I do not have television service at home just so that I can have the time to read. All my life, however, I had consciously chosen not to read about Lewis and Clark—until I read the abridged edition of *The Lewis and Clark Journals*. I made this choice because of the grief the "voyage of discovery" foreshadowed for my people—the American holocaust euphemistically referred to as "Manifest Destiny" in history books. I already knew the tragic ending of this story—enduringly sad, unjust, and full of injury. I had a closed mind about this topic because I sensed the beginnings of underlying injustice for the indigenous people and simply did not want to relive the onset of that sorry episode in American history. I even had some antipathy for Sacagawea because of her role as guide. But I gained some respect for her because of her



youth, her dreadful situation with Charbonneau, her carrying their child across the miles, and her role as a mediator and interpreter. This book disputes the import of her role in its introduction, and I suppose that is a point of contention.

I had to achieve a certain objectivity because I had a constant inclination to be offended every time I turned a page. Once I achieved that objectivity, I found the volume quite informative. I was also mildly disconcerted to have to “decode” the captains’ unique spelling, but once I grew comfortable with that I started admiring the Corps’s adaptability and resourcefulness in the face of some potentially deadly situations, like the confrontation with grizzly bears, with the Blackfeet Indians, and with winter. I was able to look at this trek for the monumental ordeal it was, especially for the non-Native Americans. I was also able to look at the book itself for the monumental editing task it represents. I have nothing to compare this book with since I haven’t read all of Lewis and Clark’s writings and probably will not need to because this volume gives us the sense that nothing of importance was left out. The editing helps us get right to the reason why Jefferson ordered the expedition. The Corps’s technology was primitive indeed, but more advanced than that of the Native Americans they encountered. Despite that, Lewis and Clark would not have completed their voyage successfully had it not been for tolerance and generosity on the part of the indigenous people. And some of their success needs to be attributed to the diplomatic skills of Sacagawea.

I have traversed, but not all at once, the route of the Corps. For those who plan to retrace the steps of Lewis and Clark in the near future, this volume should be required reading. It is that enjoyable.

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*Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement, and the West.* By Virginia Scharff. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. xi + 239 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Virginia Scharff, to borrow a phrase from Emily Dickinson, wants us to see the West *slant*. In the old iconography of the West, women—if they appeared there at all—were always rooted to the ground. Scharff is interested in a different story—a story of women as movers and mappers, as individuals who “preceded, created, contested, eluded, and survived the American West.”

Scharff tracks the migrations of six women, from early in the nineteenth century to late in the twentieth: the guide Sacagawea; the diarist Susan Magoffin, who recorded her travels across the Great Plains, down the Santa Fe trail, and into Mexico in the 1840s; the Wyoming suffragist, historian, and all-around multi-tasker Grace Raymond Hebard; the New Mexican folklorist and home economist Fabiola Cabeza de Baca; the civil rights activist Jo Ann Robinson; and the gleefully lustful California rock groupie Pamela Des Barres. The exuberant motley of this grouping is both the book’s strength and its limitation. Scharff’s broad sensibility, her willingness to seek historical meaning in as unlikely a figure as Des Barres, is bracing. And her book is at its richest with Magoffin, Hebard, and the Wyoming suffrage debate. In particular, her close reading of Magoffin’s journals, in which she shows us how Magoffin “tries to draw domestic circles around her life, to create an American geography of comfort” in the “suspect terrain” of a West not yet America, should become a model for analyzing other trail diaries.

Her chapter on Jo Ann Robinson, a key organizer of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, is less persuasive, because Robinson’s connection to the West is tenuous—she moves to Los Angeles after the boycott, but Scharff’s chapter is concerned with her life in the South. Scharff wants us to see Robinson’s claim upon

unsegregated transport as western in sensibility—Robinson, Scharff writes, “insisted on her right to the mythic westerner’s taken-for-granted power to move freely”—but because Scharff can’t show us that Robinson herself thought this way, her connection between the activist and westernness happens on the terrain of metaphor rather than evidence. Scharff’s desire to populate the West not merely with women but with a multiracial array of women is worthy, but in Robinson’s case it feels a bit like scholarly gerrymandering.

Still, Scharff writes with verve throughout—her admiration for these six women is unabashed, even as it is tempered by her acknowledgment of their shortcomings. Scharff ends her book with an autobiographical meditation upon the unmaking of the West by the new geographies laid down by suburbanization and postindustrialism. Readers interested in how the West got there, and how women moved with it and across it, will find this book an illuminating map.

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*Vaqueros, Cowboys, and Buckaroos.* By Lawrence Clayton, Jim Hoy, and Jerald Underwood. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. xvii + 274 pp. Photographs, glossary, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Perhaps the most widely recognized character in the history of the West is the American Cowboy. Across two centuries of literature, film, and even historical writing, cowboys have often been represented to the American public as stereotypical characters of the western scene. In reality these horsemen were, and still are, as varied as the landscapes in which they spent their lives. The authors of *Vaqueros, Cowboys, and Buckaroos* have created a welcome addition to a growing body of scholar-

ship that examines the regional subtleties of the men who rode the cattle ranges of the West.

Jerald Underwood examines the origins of the horseback herders of Mexico and the Southwest in “The Vaquero.” This initial chapter traces the contributions of the Arabs, Berbers, Moors, and Spanish that coalesced as the vaquero on the Plains of Mexico in the sixteenth century. The author then ably describes the trademarks of vaquero culture as they appear today on the ranches of northern Mexico and south Texas.

Lawrence Clayton readily acknowledges the Anglo-American adaptation of the horseback ways of the vaquero in the genesis of the cowboys of the Southwest and on the Southern Plains. His chapter, “The Cowboy,” interprets the evolution of the cowboy, his gear, working style, and migration north as the range cattle industry expanded across the Great Plains to the Canadian line.

In the final chapter, Jim Hoy defines the buckaroos of the arid Intermountain West, emphasizing the influence of the California vaqueros, who developed their own distinctive style of riding, working cattle, and equipment between 1769 and 1848. When the California vaqueros rode north with the early trail drives of the late nineteenth century, they introduced their way of life to a new generation of horsemen who anglicized “vaquero” into “buckaroo.”

The strength of *Vaqueros, Cowboys, and Buckaroos* goes beyond documenting the gear, clothing, working customs, cuisine, and even vernacular architecture of each group. The authors emphasize how each sub-culture differs as local customs formed regional identities, which continue into the twenty-first century. Their horseback way of life is a result of variations in landscape, weather, regional materials, style, and tradition. Museum curators, collectors, and anyone interested in daily life and work on the cattle ranges of the West will find this work a welcome addition to their bookshelves. The reader new to the subject will welcome the assistance of over 130 pho-

tographs, a chart comparing the three groups, and an extensive glossary.

ROBERT BOYD  
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*Bound for Santa Fe: The Road to New Mexico and the American Conquest, 1806-1848.* By Stephen G. Hyslop. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. xiii + 514 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

The history of the Santa Fe Trail has been repeated many times, often with the same material told in the same manner, along with the same interpretation. Stephen Hyslop's volume is then a refreshing new view of the old story. Hyslop uses original accounts of the trail told by the men and women who participated in this grand adventure. In twenty-two chapters he uses the journals of over eighty travelers. He considers the narratives both for their historical and literary value and aims to set them in a larger historical context.

In the first of the book's three parts, Hyslop sets the stage and lays a framework for understanding the trail as an "avenue of exchange," referring not only to the exchange of goods for money, but also the exchange between peoples along the trail. He describes the 1816 conflict between the Auguste Chouteau party and a band of the Pawnee on the Great Plains at the location that would become known as Chouteau's Island as an exchange. For the Pawnees, the Americans were "a disturbing new presence on the plains" with whom they had to deal when in the past they had preferred dealing with the Spanish. From them they could get presents for being peaceful; and if conditions were right on their way out of the territory, they could perhaps make off with Spanish horses, mules, and other assets. Each encounter was an exchange whether it involved conflict, trade, culture, or ideas.

The second part deals with the journey geographically as described by the travelers in

their journals. Water was a necessity for travelers, and one day without finding a source could put the caravans in peril. Josiah Gregg describes not recognizing the Cimarron River after crossing the "dry Jornada" in western Kansas. Added to the peril was an encounter with a large group of Indians. Thought at first hostile, captain of the caravan Elisha Stanley sealed peace by smoking a peace pipe with the Chief. The encounter with the Indians was fortunate for they led the caravan to one of the Cimarron springs where water was refreshingly found. Hyslop describes unstated principles of dealing with Indians and the dangers of misunderstandings.

The invasion of New Mexico and the Southwest occupies the book's final section. Stephen Watts Kearny, commander of the so-called Army of the West, marched down the Santa Fe Trail leading regular and volunteer soldiers. Their journals provide a wealth of information on the trail and the strange province of New Mexico. The initial invasion was unopposed, but resistance later arose, and Governor Charles Bent, a master of the Santa Fe and Plains trade through his fort on the Arkansas River, was killed as the Taos Indians led the resistance. Hyslop notes that the invasion force was anticipated as a consequence of the trade and exchanges that had been going on for many years.

Although the length of some chapters sometimes muffles their thrust, this is a minor problem. For a new view of the Santa Fe Trail that involves not only the Missouri traders, but the Indians of the Great Plains and the Spanish, Mexicans, and Pueblo people of the Southwest, this book is a must. Hyslop wrings new views and interpretations out of the old standby journals and does so in a way that is engaging and respectful, provoking new thought.

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*Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000.* By Craig Miner. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002. xvii + 534 pp. Photographs, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Writing a one-volume state history is a formidable task. Deciding what political, economic, and social topics to cover that reflect the state's identity and character are extremely challenging. Craig Miner recognized and accepted these challenges, and the result is the best single-volume history of Kansas written to date.

Miner focuses his study on the state's important people and key events, emphasizing throughout how these people and events contributed to many of the contrasting attitudes and images of Kansas—progressive, conservative, racist, backward—which continue to persist in the twenty-first century. Astute evaluations of many of the colorful and controversial figures in Kansas history, such as Charles Robinson, James Lane, John Brown, Mary Lease, Carry Nation, William Allen White, Rolla Clymer, John Brinkley, and Joan Finney, are Miner's forte. His critical analysis of significant events is equally thought provoking. Topics include the turbulent territorial period; land settlement; railroad construction; farming and labor problems; suffrage, prohibition, populist, and progressive reform movements; the impact of automobiles, oil discoveries, and aviation; and the civil rights movement. In addition, Miner provides engrossing commentary on movie censorship, particularly the banning of the film *Birth of a Nation* in the state, and on state education issues, including the creation and role of state institutions of higher learning.

Some readers may desire more coverage of particular subjects. For example, Miner could have given more information on Native Americans, particularly the Indian Wars, the impact of missionaries on Indian cultures, and early twentieth-century issues. He does, however, address Indian gaming issues under Governor Finney. Other readers may want more

mention of social, cultural, and athletic events that involved Kansans.

Miner's *Kansas* is based on sound research and extensive citations of sources. The book contains appropriate illustrations, though better maps could have been provided. The author has included an informative and well-organized introduction and conclusion that help readers better understand the state's past, present, and future. Numerous and well-placed direct quotations support Miner's interpretations, and the historiography he provides is valuable. Students of Kansas history will definitely want to include this magnificent book in their collections.

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*Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West.* By David M. Wrobel. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002. xi + 322 pp. Photographs, illustrations, maps, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$34.95.

Powerful mythologies have always blocked people's understanding of the American West. This book provides important insights into this issue by juxtaposing the literatures of boosterism and reminiscence. The author reminds us that both sentiments were central to the creation of regional identity. One looked to a future where sophisticated cities and irrigated fields would replace alkali and coyotes. The other reshaped the past through stories of how hardship and sacrifice underlaid modern luxury.

With two chapters devoted to each genre, Wrobel reminds us how omnipresent these literatures were between the 1870s and the 1930s. His discussions are competent, but in the case of boosterism cover mostly familiar ground. The idea that new settlers inevitably were drawn into the promotion process in order to

protect their investments is new to me, however, as is the thought that local responses to outside criticism may have fostered initial senses of place. The reminiscences chapters conclude that voluminous, nearly unvarying stories of covered wagons and heroism are largely responsible for the frontier myth that subsequently was reinforced in movies and novels.

With only 166 pages of text and another thirty of photographs, this is a short book. Such brevity on an important and original topic should encourage a wide readership, but I found myself troubled. The points made in the initial chapters, although significant, are also simple and could be boiled down to a few pages. Wrobel then adds a somewhat tangential fifth chapter on how the presence of Chinese, Hispanic, and Indian peoples complicated the tasks of selling and remembering the region.

The book comes together in its final, sixth chapter where the author uses his earlier insights to ponder regional identity for the present and future. Here is Wrobel at his best: informed, articulate, and passionate. He notes, for example, similarities between today's and yesteryear's advertisements to buy a disappearing landscape quickly and to enjoy it without having to sacrifice any amenities. Modern residents of Oregon and Montana are also shown as similar to the old pioneers in their evocation of past simplicity in the wake of ongoing invasions of boorish Californians. Finally, Wrobel articulates the need to move sense-of-place definitions beyond static themes of whiteness and rurality. In my opinion the materials in *Promised Lands* would have made a wonderful essay. Stretched into a book they are bloated but still very good.

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*The False Traitor: Louis Riel in Canadian Culture.* By Albert Braz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. xi + 245 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

In *The False Traitor: Louis Riel in Canadian Culture*, Albert Braz examines treatments of the mercurial nineteenth-century Métis leader in an astonishing array of plays, poems, novels, television dramas, Hollywood films, and sculpture. His study spans the century and more since Riel emerged at the head of the Métis resistance at Red River, Manitoba, in 1869-70 and was executed in 1885 as a traitor to Canada for his role in fomenting rebellion on the Saskatchewan.

Braz's study reveals a myriad of characterizations of Riel, some based on the historical record, many of them figments of an author's colorful and sometimes lurid imagination. Though significant from historical and cultural perspectives, few of them proved of enduring artistic merit. These include manifestations of Riel as "a sage and a madman; a Catholic mystic and an Anabaptist visionary; an Aboriginal leader and a puppet of white forces; a cultural mediator and a promoter of racial warfare; a Prairie maverick and a pan-Canadian patriot." Such diversity persists, Braz notes, despite Louis Riel's own extensive introspective writings in which he associated himself firmly with the Métis community. The most intriguing of these discrepancies for Braz is Riel's transformation in English Canadian culture from the villain of 1885 to hero of the alienated West, spiritual father of Canadian multiculturalism, and, even more astounding, Father of Confederation.

Braz explains this conundrum with the argument that cultural portraits of Riel more accurately reflect the authors of the various pieces than the subject they depict. Thus Riel has come to serve a largely symbolic and often unrecognizable role in the popular iconography of the country which, as a representative of the Métis nation, he held in deep suspicion.

Braz has done an excellent job of unearthing cultural representations of Riel in a variety of media and establishing them in their literary or artistic context. He is less successful in connecting these works explicitly to his central argument: that they reflect their creators more than their subject. More often than not he leaves us in the dark about the contemporary influences that brought the creators to depict Riel alternately as villain, hero, mediator, martyr, and madman. This may result from the fact that while his grasp of cultural sources is apparent, his command of historical literature is less evident.

*The False Traitor* offers an original and persuasive perspective on the much studied but still elusive figure of Louis Riel, shedding light on the obstructions that continue to obscure the Métis hero's identity.

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*Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull: Inventing the Wild West.* By Bobby Bridger. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. xx + 480 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95.

Bobby Bridger has written a lively paced biography of Buffalo Bill Cody. Although the subtitle, *Inventing the Wild West*, promises much, Bridger's emphasis is strictly on interpretation of Cody's personality rather than a revision of the scout's significance to Great Plains history or the presentation of new material. This theme fits well into Bridger's avocation as an entertainer, producing and presenting *A Ballad of the West*, a trilogy of one-man shows depicting America's frontier period. The book covers Cody's early years through the Indian Wars, the days of his *Wild West* extravaganza, and his last years.

Unfortunately, Bridger relies on too few well-known sources to lay claim to much originality or serious scholarly synthesis. Cody's

autobiography, *The Life of Honorable William F. Cody* (1879, reprinted 1978), is used profusely throughout the book as is Don Russell's *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (1960). Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) is used far too much to lend documented credibility to Native American viewpoints. Most of the modern definitive secondary studies of the events Cody was involved with are missing, and consequently Bridger repeats many little historical errors from the early accounts he relies on that have long been questioned or proven otherwise. Roman Nose was not a Dog Soldier or a Southern Cheyenne chief. He was a member of the Suhtai clan, a Northern Cheyenne, and a Crooked Lance. He merely fought with the Dog Soldiers in their struggle for the Smoky Hill and Republican River country. Never was he a chief. Cody's highly disputed claim to killing Tall Bull at the Battle of Summit Springs is not considered in the light of all the conflicting claims. Most disappointing is a lack of documented consideration of Cody's changing image over the decades. Such evolving images of icons are essential to ascertaining significance through the years as culture and attitudes change with the times.

Despite these shortcomings Bridger has tried to present a side to Cody that is often ignored—his genuine affection for Native Americans (especially individual Native Americans he personally knew), a thesis that is presented with passion. Cody, the author points out, was not a bloodthirsty Indian killer but a man who, despite defending his own life in Indian fights, cared deeply about preserving indigenous culture and nostalgia for as long as possible in a non-patronizing manner, a personality trait often lost in his flamboyance and showmanship. Herein lies Bridger's contribution to the literature of this ubiquitous western figure. As a popular introduction to the life of William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull* is well written with the popular reader in mind and highly recommended. Scholars seeking new insights and nuances into



Cody's personality and significance may be less satisfied.

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*Woman Walking Ahead: In Search of Catherine Weldon and Sitting Bull* By Eileen Pollack. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 360 pp. Halftones, maps, notes, sources, index. \$29.95.

There are many ways of presenting historical events and persons, including narrative and analysis, or the use of a variety of approaches. In this ingenious and personal book, Eileen Pollack fleshes out historical evidence with informed speculation and with details of her quest for data. Such methodology makes possible the recreation of bits of history that otherwise go unremarked.

In this case, the bit of history concerns the Great Plains Sioux. In 1889, a widowed New Yorker, Catherine Weldon, representing the National Indian Defense Association, traveled to the Standing Rock reservation in the Dakota Territory to help Sitting Bull and the Sioux people resist the United States government's attempts to take their land. Unfortunately, Weldon's compassion was far outweighed by the difficulties confronting her. She did not speak Sioux, nor did Sitting Bull speak English. She knew little of Sioux culture. Perhaps the stickiest part of the situation was Weldon's being a woman helping a man. Despite racial and cultural differences, Sitting Bull proposed marriage to her, which shocked and even insulted her. Like so many other white colonialist women in the American West, Weldon thought of herself as a superior savior to inferior Natives, hardly a figure to stir an Indian's ardor.

From others, Weldon's actions drew mixed reactions. When the Standing Rock agent ordered Weldon to leave, she did so, only to

return in 1890 with her teen-age son. She did what she could for the Sioux, who named her *Woman Walking Ahead*, presumably ahead of other whites. To whites, however, Weldon was an anomaly. When the Ghost Dance movement, promising an Indian messiah, and the subsequent "uprising" of 1890-91 erupted, white journalists blamed Weldon, who had, in fact, attempted to disabuse Sitting Bull of his beliefs. Using such scurrilous terms as "white squaw," reporters lashed out at a white female who stepped out of women's "proper place," at a do-good reformer who meddled in the Indian "problem," and at an easterner who interfered with western affairs.

Even though this account is fascinating, the addition of some women's history and some postmodernist theory would put Weldon in the context of larger historical developments. Still, this study is very welcome. It not only adds insight into the Indian reform movement and Sioux-white politics, but reconstitutes the shadowy yet important figure of Catherine Weldon.

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*Icelanders in North America: The First Settlers.* By Jonas Thor. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002. 306 pp. Photographs, maps, figures, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. C\$19.95.

Jonas Thor's study offers an excellent view into the background and development of Icelandic migration to the West, briefly outlining immigration to Utah in the 1850s and Brazil in the 1860-70s, but primarily focusing on mass migration from 1870 to 1914 to and within the North American prairies, and gravitating to the west coast.

Thor outlines the climatic, demographic, geological, social, and political factors that explain why a sizable portion of the Icelandic

population was eventually swept into the stream of mass migration to the West. But his central concern is to analyze and assess the reasons for the success or failure of each settlement, critiquing the aim that shaped Icelandic settlement history through the 1870s, which was to set up a separate colony where Icelanders could maintain their language, culture, and customs.

Thor explains that the migrants felt driven to demonstrate that their departure during Iceland's battle for independence from Denmark did not entail a rejection of their heritage, and that cultural retention seemed viable because the nation was so small and heterogeneous it was "like one big family." Moreover, many early leaders believed that adjustment to North America would best be accommodated in an exclusively Icelandic colony. Thor asserts that "It mattered almost as much to many of the migrants to be able to speak their mother tongue and maintain Icelandic traditions and culture, as to create a better life for themselves."

According to Thor, the dream of a separate colony had been fulfilled with the establishment of New Iceland in 1875 (later joined with Manitoba), but was discarded as being impractical already by the end of the 1870s. Depicting the distinctive cultural and economic development of each settlement, he argues that success in terms of survival and cultural integration was better secured in mixed settlements where more established ethnic groups—commonly other Scandinavians—could teach the Icelanders at the outset how to manage in the utterly unfamiliar environment.

This first comprehensive overview available in English can without hesitation be recommended to all those interested in migration studies or the history of Icelanders in North America. Although Icelandic immigrants took great pains to record their settlement history, it has been largely inaccessible. The most substantial overview, prior to Thor's, is in Icelandic. Additional material, in English, gathered here by Thor into a coherent and readable

account, comes from regional and family histories, newspaper and periodical articles, diaries and letters, some appearing in print for the first time.

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*The New Warriors: Native American Leaders since 1900.* Edited by R. David Edmunds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. viii + 346 pp. Photographs, bibliographical references, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

R. David Edmunds and his colleagues have essayed a needed task, offering readers the premise that American Indians still live in viable societies and generate outstanding leadership. Sadly, the bulk of scholarly and popular attention proffers the romantic image of "noble savages" defending a doomed way of life. Most Americans have a vague idea or two about Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Geronimo, but no knowledge of Phillip Martin and Robert Yellowtail. *The New Warriors* is a good start in correcting an ignorance that has unfortunate consequences as Indians struggle to maintain their unique place in America in the twenty-first century.

Contributors offer short biographies of fourteen outstanding American Indians of the twentieth century (some remain active). Charles Curtis of the infamous Curtis Act that obliterated the Indian governments of soon-to-be Oklahoma is the anomaly among the group, the rest having defended sovereignty. Yet it is important to realize that some Indians bought the idea of assimilation.

The rest of the group includes Pan-Indian spokespersons who advocated for Indian issues in the halls of dominant society power, individuals who directed tribal governments, and spokespersons for specialized concerns from Indian Country. The "warriors" described are Charles Curtis (Kaw), Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, a Dakota), Robert Yellow-

tail (Crow), Vine V. Deloria Sr. (Dakota), D'Arcy McNickle (Métis-Flathead), LaDonna Harris (Comanche), Russell Means (Lakota), Ada Deer (Menominee), Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne), Janine Pease Pretty-on-Top (Crow), and Walter Echo-Hawk (Pawnee).

These biographies provide a short, person-centered history of the unfolding of American Indian history in the twentieth century. One begins with the assimilationist Kaw who became a vice president of the United States and concludes with the lawyer who leads the Native American Rights Fund. In between are narratives of interesting, courageous, dedicated individuals. Although the title is hokey and inadvertently perpetuates nineteenth-century analogies, the book is valuable. Most of the biographies would have benefitted by less hagiography and more criticism. Readers will now know that Indian communities continue to produce effective leaders, that Indians have not disappeared, and that there is not a single Indian voice.

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*Going Places: Transportation Redefines the Twentieth-Century West.* By Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. xix + 419 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, suggested reading, index. \$39.95.

What was unique about the West in twentieth-century transportation history? Carlos Schwantes does not make the claim, but the bulk of what he writes suggests that aviation's triumph as the preferred mode of passenger travel owes a great deal to the circumstances of geography in the American West. Getting there faster was the business traveler's need. Railroads could provide this in the East, but not in the West, where distances simply were too great. In one of the most interesting sec-

tions of *Going Places*, Schwantes shows how the government's manipulation of air mail contracts not only helped define the outlines of intercity commerce in the West, but also created the network structure of the nation's leading airline companies.

Schwantes's focus is that of the social historian, writing from archives, photo collections, and an array of advertising brochures and passenger timetables. The images he includes are well chosen and help connect the rather dull, abstract notion of "transportation" to the West itself. But even though he makes the human dimension come alive, he misses much of transportation's business side.

One might make the case that the real changes in transportation in the twentieth-century West involved freight, not people. The shift from railroads to trucks affected every agricultural commodity. The shift from a national to a global economy made Los Angeles the nation's most important seaport and produced massive increases in business at all of the West Coast ports. The construction of pipelines to transmit oil and gas from the Texas, Oklahoma, and Gulf Coast fields revolutionized home heating and electric power generation. Invention of the unit grain train made it cheaper for Great Plains farmers to ship their crops west instead of east. The Clean Air Act of 1970 and the unit coal train made Wyoming the leading source of energy for electric power generation. Deregulation of the airline industry, overnight parcel delivery, and the creation of airline hubs totally reshaped the airline business and made the likes of Denver and Dallas central rather than peripheral to the nation as a whole.

These were innovations that led, one by one, to intense competition between transportation modes as well as between individual companies and touched off a wave of corporate mergers that has yet to subside. In all cases it was the American West, with its great distances between isolated, growing populations, that demanded more, faster, and better transportation. Schwantes alludes to some of these developments, but he might have told



us more. His thesis is stronger than his examples are exhaustive.

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*Bienfait: The Saskatchewan Miners' Struggle of '31.* By Stephen L. Endicott. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. xi + 180 pp. Photographs, illustrations, appendices, notes, annotated bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

A strike is a privileged moment for the historian. Floodlights get shone on the working lives of wage earners that would otherwise get little public attention. Issues of collective working-class organization and politics stand out vividly. The relative power of contending forces in capitalist society is starkly clear. And the events of the confrontation typically provide plenty of high drama. Stephen Endicott has taken hold of these elements in a well-remembered miners' strike on the Canadian Prairies and given us a fascinating, beautifully written account of working-class struggle in the depths of the Depression.

Southern Saskatchewan's Estevan coalfields had never seen strikes before some six hundred workers walked out of the region's six major mines in the summer of 1931. The low wages and harsh working conditions that were soon brought to light were certainly fuel for such a revolt, but for years various forms of stern industrial paternalism had kept the miners' grievances from congealing into confrontational solidarity. Like so many other western mining camps, this one drew together a diverse work force of immigrants from Britain and central and eastern Europe, who pulled together a lively community life in the semi-rural environment around the small village of Bienfait (pronounced "Bean-fate"). The spark that ignited the fire of resistance was a wage

cut, prompted by the coal operators' concerns about increased competition from a new strip-mining company. The flames were fanned by the arrival of Communist activists, who connected with radicals in the local Ukrainian population, and the organization of a local of the Mine Workers' Union of Canada, affiliated to the radical Workers' Unity League (WUL).

Endicott carefully describes the ensuing confrontation that would culminate in three strikers being killed by RCMP officers during a parade three weeks into the strike. He provides a vivid case study of standard strike-breaking tactics in the pre-WWII era: refusing to meet the union or negotiate; cutting off credit at company stores and threatening to evict strikers from company housing or shacks on company property; trying to turn public opinion against the miners by attacking the Communist connection and playing the "loyalty" card by calling on military veterans to defend their community against outsiders; recruiting enough scabs to create confrontation with strikers in hopes of provoking police intervention (strikebreakers were exasperated and infuriated by the local RCMP chief's unwillingness to be stampeded and his sympathy for workers' grievances); and lobbying all levels of government for support. Although it was state violence that eventually brought blood to the streets, Endicott makes clear that government officials and politicians initially moved cautiously, sending in mediators and a royal commission to attempt to diffuse the crisis.

The book also provides a carefully drawn picture of how union leaders strategized in such a hostile context: publicly calling for negotiations, foregrounding of the Anglo-Celtic leaders to deflect the charges of "disloyalty," and using mass pickets and public demonstrations to discourage scabs and display determination, but scrupulously avoiding violence. Endicott's close examination of union tactics in this strike gives us a good opportunity to assess the kind of unionism that the Communist-led WUL

offered workers and the difference that radical politics could make to union activities.<sup>6</sup> He is keen to present the organization in the best possible light and marshals plenty of evidence to make a convincing case that it attracted solid support and trust among Saskatchewan's miners. I wish he had pushed further in analysing this "red" union, however. Aside from reporting the anti-communist hysteria of the miner owners and politicians and the stirring speeches of such radical visitors as Sam Scarlett and Annie Buller, he is oddly silent on the actual role played in union decision making by the local Communists and the national or regional organizers who came to town. We also get little sense of the larger life of the WUL across the country, particularly the way it fit into the strident, ultra-revolutionary "Third Period" of Communist politics. Aside from a stinging critique of local union secretiveness from the WUL's national secretary, Tom Ewen, Endicott shies away from telling us how the party was constructing this struggle for mass consumption in the pages of the *Worker*. Given what we know about the way Communists operated elsewhere at this point, it seems unlikely that the story can be reduced simply to one of unfair red-baiting of a struggling local union.

The strike did make national news and has survived in the historic memory of southern Saskatchewan and the Canadian left more broadly. In one of the most moving sections of the book, Endicott relates his efforts to retrieve that memory from two elderly sisters whose menfolk participated in the strike (one of whom was killed) and who had tried to bury it. The passage is a sharp reminder that, whatever historians may make of it, a strike can be an agonizing, painful moment in the lives of working people.

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*Rodeo Queens and the American Dream*. By Joan Burbick. New York: PublicAffairs, 2002. vii + 246 pp. Photographs, works consulted, index. \$26.00 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

Joan Burbick discusses the young women who promoted rodeos from the early 1920s until the 1990s. In the early years the person who sold the most tickets was picked as Queen. Other methods were later used to create an image of the perfect western woman.

The author writes well, especially when describing the land. But some readers will question her choice of words when she describes the rodeo more specifically.

For some people rodeo was an attempt to preserve ranch life. At times there were strong ties to local Indian groups. Eventually the rodeo changed dramatically and Corporate America used it to make money by sponsoring a huge sport and by creating images. Rodeo meant different things to different people at different times.

One thing that does recur frequently is the importance of horses to the girls and women. Most of those who became Rodeo Queens liked to ride; it was a way to escape what could be dull ranch life or to explore the land with friends. Anyone who has ridden in the open country knows what that means; it can hardly be understood by those who have not had the chance to do it.

The author concentrates on Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. She discusses Las Vegas and the absurd idea that American values can be promoted in that place. But she omits a great deal, such as the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain areas. Rodeos have certainly been promoted in both regions but she almost completely ignores them.

Any historian must also note a serious problem: the book has no footnotes. The author explains in her acknowledgments that she interviewed women who had been Rodeo Queens, but used only their first names or fictitious names to protect their privacy. Why is this kind of privacy necessary? If the women allowed the interviews, why did they want

themselves hidden from view? Have the interviews been saved? Will they ever be available for further study or research? No answers are given.

Joan Burbick decries the decline of the West. She notes well that one cause of the problems she sees is the Federal government, but she does not develop this part of the story. Shall we see another book?

LAWRENCE R. BORNE  
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Northern Kentucky University

*"This Is America?" The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas.* By Rusty L. Monhollon. New York: Palgrave, 2002. xvi + 284 pp. Photographs, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

This book is the second recent treatment of dissent in Kansas cities in the late twentieth century. Along with Gretchen Eick's *Dissent in Wichita* (2001), it shows that where active protest was concerned, Kansas in the 1960s and 1970s was no backwater. One could add the struggle over the Wolf Creek nuclear plant in the same era to complete the picture of a state evenly split on issues.

Monhollon is sympathetic to the activists in Lawrence, seeing developments there as the inevitable consequence of national trends played out in a way that should not have been unexpected in a college town. On the other hand, despite the "Bleeding Kansas" territorial tradition, Lawrence as a whole had become considerably more conservative since the 1850s. Consequently activism over everything from an integrated public swimming pool, to the demand for a black cheerleader and homecoming queen at the University of Kansas, to the protests over Viet Nam revealed a deep "town/gown" split and a suspicion on the part of townspeople that KU was soft on law and order and infiltrated by outside radicals.

Truly, some of the incidents and personalities were most frightening to a town that had become complacent. H. Leonard Harrison was not only an articulate and inflammatory black activist, but had a criminal record. When he was employed by KU to teach a class, some thought things had gotten out of hand. There were fire bombings—of the ROTC facilities and, most prominently, the student union in 1970. There were snipers. And there were true riots over police actions, such as the shooting of black activist Rick Dowdell by police. The Black Student Union published a paper so radical and sometimes so obscene that occasionally local printers refused to print it. Chancellor Lawrence Chalmers had to walk a fine line between the defense of free speech and academic freedom, even for Abbie Hoffman, and making Lawrence a tinderbox.

This book makes excellent use of newspapers, oral history, and university archives to tell a vivid story with implications far beyond local history. It does well in showing the variations among both radicals and conservatives and presenting all sides fairly. Lawrence was America, and the Great Plains was in no way insulated from the passions of the times.

CRAIG MINER  
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Wichita State University

*The American West in 2000: Essays in Honor of Gerald D. Nash.* Edited by Richard W. Etulain and Ferenc M. Szasz. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. viii + 208 pp. Tables, notes, bibliographical references, index. \$29.95.

*The American West in 2000* is a literary labor of love edited by two former colleagues of the late Gerald D. Nash, a longtime professor of history at the University of New Mexico, and composed of essay contributions from former students, colleagues, and friends. Originally conceived as a retirement festschrift,



including a ten-page autobiography by Nash himself, the book became instead a memorial tribute to Nash upon his death in 2000.

Nash, the historian, is best known for his work on the history of the twentieth-century American West, and in particular his provocative and comprehensive treatments of western urbanization, the role of the federal government in the modern economic development of the West, and his assertion that the post-World War II West assumed a role as a regional agent of national cultural change. To read about the American West's recent history requires reading Nash, indeed a great deal of Nash, for his work explores the first of what will be many efforts at tracing the West's modern era.

During Nash's later years, he grew concerned, and some would say obsessed, with the direction of the "New Western History." In some unfortunate ways, his rantings detracted from his historical contributions. Ferenc Szasz underscores this observation when he notes in the brief introduction to this volume that Nash "considered the excesses of the New Western History as his particular *bête noire*." Why this occurred can only be conjectured. Some have attributed Nash's strong reaction to his origins in Nazi Germany, his and his family's escape from the Holocaust, and his own unique evolution as a historian of the American West. Another explanation might be that because he pegged his own intellectual contributions to the economic history of the twentieth-century West by concentrating on the region's external connections to the nation, he felt particularly challenged by theories that were place-based and emphasized social history.

Ten essays of a wide variety comprise the volume. After Nash's brief autobiographical remembrances, articles follow that concern modern mining history, by Christopher J. Huggard, four recent decades of women's history and western politics in thirteen western states (none of the Great Plains), by Marjorie Bell Chambers, a lengthy discussion of western cities as historically unexceptional, by Roger W. Lotchin, a stream-of-consciousness

essay on western futurism, by Gene M. Gressley, and Richard W. Etulain's tribute to Gerald Nash. But among the best are those by Margaret Connell-Szasz, Donald J. Pisani, Arthur R. Gómez, Ferenc M. Szasz, and Carol Lynn MacGregor.

Connell-Szasz is currently embarking upon a major history project about what she calls the Celtic Worlds. She brings to this subject a comparative perspective, and her thoughtful essay describing the recent cultural renaissances in Native America and in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland is a model for comparative history conceptualization. Any historian who wishes to take on the difficult task of writing comparative history should ponder this article.

Pisani provides a tight and concise history of the Bureau of Reclamation and how it "re-invented itself many times," concentrating on the Bureau's latest reincarnation after World War II. It was, after all, the era of James Watt and Jimmy Carter, and water policy was pre-eminent. Of particular interest is the Bureau's handling of the Cold War and the exportation of water technology and its involvement in the Central Arizona Project. Gómez, like Pisani, is interested in the terrain of environmental history in the American West, but his essay concentrates on national parks and the pressures and challenges they faced near the end of the twentieth century. Gómez documents how national park modernization occurred while the very real threats of reduced funding, political hostility in Congress and from states seeking parklands, recalcitrant leadership, and huge increases in park visitors threatened the national parks' very existence. One riveting incident Gómez includes is of a Taos Pueblo meeting with parks, land management, and air force officials regarding supersonic flights over the Pueblo and Blue Lake. The officials simply did not understand the cultural disruption this caused and had to be embarrassed into re-evaluating their past policies.

Szasz offers an overview of modern religious developments in the American West, chronicling the splintering and seemingly endless

variety of religions that have found solace in the West following World War II. After a brief period of identifying common ground in order to stand united during the wars, both hot and cold, the West's religions embraced pluralism and often concentrated in the growing urban areas. Szasz includes specific sections on Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and Santa Fe religious activities. Finally, MacGregor explains the evolution of cultural life in a western city—Boise, Idaho—that after World War II increased exponentially. Her theme, that of explaining how geographical isolation when combined with prosperity led to local investments in the arts, humanities, and the overall “quality of life” and emboldened Boise, enhancing its growth and importance in the West, is well-written, thoroughly documented, and forcefully argued.

Those readers interested in a Great Plains perspective will not find it often in this book, nor, for that matter, in most of the writings of Gerald Nash. Margaret Connell-Szasz does consider several Plains Indian writers, and Ferenc Szasz includes a number of examples from Plains parishes, including a census count on the number of churches in Lincoln, Roswell, and Amarillo, and a brief description of Denver.

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*Visions of the Land: Science, Literature, and the American Environment from the Era of Exploration to the Age of Ecology.* By Michael A. Bryson. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002. xvii + 228 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$16.50 paper.

Michael A. Bryson has undertaken an ambitious study of the connections between the representation of nature and the practice of science in America. Covering the hundred-and-thirty-year period from the 1840s to the 1960s, the author dissects the work of seven distinguished writers through a diverse array

of documents, ranging from technical reports and exploration narratives to essays, utopian fiction, autobiography, and popular scientific literature. The seven whose visions of the land he seeks to capture are Richard Byrd, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Susan Cooper, Rachel Carson, John Charles Frémont, John Wesley Powell, and Loren Eiseley. While the work of the latter three is most directly related to the interests of this journal, Bryson's skillful weaving together of the various skeins has rendered them all of a piece.

Working within a long tradition of wilderness exploration in America by various countries and individuals, John Charles Frémont represents the scientist as explorer-hero, the very antithesis of the laboratory-bound experimentalist familiar to the public mind. Yet underlying his work in cartography, paleontology, and surveying was the emerging impact of technology and, most important, the empirical study of nature. No matter where he roamed, Frémont could no more separate himself from the “cool rationality of science” than could his contemporary and fellow myth-maker, the great lyrical trickster Henry David Thoreau.

John Wesley Powell, too, made his reputation as a one-armed conquistador of the wilderness, most especially the heretofore unnavigated Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Yet underlying Powell's hard-earned reputation was an internal struggle regarding the place of science in new and future communities spawned by the pioneer movement, what Bryson terms “reimagining the West.” It was Powell who audaciously proposed that those who contemplated settling in certain parts of the Great Plains take a second, or even third, look. Based on years of hydrological and other scientific study, the explorer-cum-bureaucrat counseled extreme caution, a view greeted with little enthusiasm in the halls of Congress, where the mantra of “California or bust!” drowned out virtually all dissent.

Loren Eiseley, by contrast, was very much a stay-at-home anthropologist, one whose early fieldwork gradually decreased to a trickle un-

til, by the time he reached middle age, he rarely ventured beyond his apartment in a suburb of Philadelphia, except to follow the lecture tour or to vacation on Florida's tony Sanibel Island. A popular writer of unusual gifts, Eiseley was prone to exaggeration and myth, a trait with which Bryson does not credit him sufficiently. Indeed, he pairs Eiseley in the book with the government scientist Rachel Carson, who spent a great deal of time in the field practicing her calling, then writing about it in both eloquent and disturbing bestsellers that changed the world. Eiseley, on the other hand, took no active part in the emerging environmental movement. Indeed, he was pretty much content to envision the coming of the next great ice age when all would be swept clean, creating yet another tabula rasa on which nature would write a new blueprint for evolution.

GALE E. CHRISTIANSON  
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*Reading "The Virginian" in the New West.* Edited by Melody Graulich and Stephen Tatum. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xix + 300 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 paper.

*The Virginian* is here to stay. For most of the first century of its life, critics gave their attention to what they found on the novel's face: the rugged hero, conquest, a reinvigorated national identity, the triumph of patriarchal law and of good over evil. It was a tale out of Turner. This timely new volume confirms and elaborates recent, revisionist moves to overturn the consensus reading and replace it with interrogations of the novel's competing, even contradictory perspectives in matters of race, class, and gender. Once the embodiment of a faith in the American character and mission, *The Virginian* commences its second century as a complex expression of how our errand into the wilderness has gone astray.

There is something for nearly everyone in *Reading "The Virginian" in the New West*. Students of film will surely appreciate Richard Hutson's thoughtful survey of several early screen adaptations of the novel; history buffs will be edified by Gary Scharnhorst's commentary on *The Virginian* and the Pullman Strike of 1894, as they also will be by Susan Kollin's balanced assessment of attempts to maintain sharp distinctions between New West and Old West, both in the novel and in regional studies more generally; and comparativists will find much to interest them in Zeese Papanikolas's chapter on "The Cowboy and the Gaucho." In the midst of such rich variety, however, editors Melody Graulich and Stephen Tatum properly emphasize what virtually all the contributors to the volume assume: "that Wister's novel is not a coherent, harmoniously unified text . . . but rather a verbal and visual construct where the confrontation of several discourses—some explicit, some implicit or absent—produces a multiplicity of meanings."

Jennifer S. Tuttle and the late Louis Owens argue that Wister's erasure of Indians is conspicuous and, for that, quite telling. Victoria Lamont contrasts *The Virginian* with Frances McElrath's *The Rustler*, also published in 1902, arguing that the early western "became insistently masculine precisely because it . . . had become subject to feminist occupation." Along related lines, Melody Graulich draws critical attention to Wister's surprising readiness to contemplate the crossing of gender roles. Neil Campbell is similarly attentive to Wister's unconscious attraction to the very hybridity and mixing from which his novel outwardly recoils. William R. Handley traces key contradictions and omissions in *The Virginian* to its author's complex sexuality. Erotic themes are central as well to Stephen Tatum's analysis of the novel's "aesthetic of presentation through concealment" as manifest in the synergistic relationship between the verbal text and its illustrations. Tatum's afterword, with its moving evocation of the novel's yearning after "a mythos of reciprocity and exchange,



of communion," is yet another element in the overall success of this valuable collection.

Reading "*The Virginian*" in the New West will likely set the critical agenda in Wister studies for many years to come.

FORREST G. ROBINSON

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University of California, Santa Cruz

*The Word Rides Again: Rereading the Frontier in American Fiction.* By J. David Stevens. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002. xx + 236 pp. Notes, works cited, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

The method of *The Word Rides Again* is straightforward. J. David Stevens first constructs a model of the popular Western novel or "frontier narrative," complete with standard genealogy and a concise review of fifty years of critical response, and then uses that template to demonstrate that some "mainstream" novels (*Hobomok*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*) are actually frontier fiction in disguise, while some frontier fiction (by Bret Harte, Owen Wister, and Frank Waters) is actually more complex or problematic than the stereotype would suggest. (He also reads fiction by two Native American writers, John Rollin Ridge and Zitkala-Ša, as revisionist Westerns.) Stevens's goal is "to pull back on [the] political reins" by bucking the trend of recent Western criticism, which risks falling into "a demagoguery created in the name of interdisciplinarity, multiculturalism, and political progressivism." To this end he "eschew[s] jargonized philosophical posturing for close textual study," the result being "pretty much what one might expect": a series of individual readings making cautious use of theoretical insights from across the political and critical spectrum and aiming to offend no one.

Some parts of the book will be useful to me as a teacher. His discussion of the Remington-

Wister-Roosevelt connection is a handy brief summary that I may end up assigning to students in a Western literature or Realism and Naturalism class, and his claims for the literary value of Waters's *The Man Who Killed the Deer* have convinced me to consider it for future syllabi. Perhaps his most daring reading is of Cather: he argues that "the impulses, biases, and events of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* can be understood together if the book is read as a thematically straightforward, if slightly amended, version of the popular frontier novel."

After a while Stevens's relentless defense of the Western against the straw man of theoretical oversimplification becomes wearying. And the tone is explicitly nostalgic: "The conscious design of *The Word Rides Again* . . . was to return to its own brand of yesteryear in which discussions of frontier literature were not automatically polarized and charged with the political voltage that they are today." People who take frontier literature seriously won't find much that's new in this book, and people who don't take frontier literature seriously aren't likely to be persuaded to do so by Stevens's chiding.

ERIC HEYNE

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University of Alaska Fairbanks

*Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War.* By Steven Trout. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. ix + 225 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.

Steven Trout offers a fresh approach to the study of Cather as a writer of war fiction and situates her squarely among the principally male writers of World War I. In lucid prose, Trout presents a convincing argument that Cather's prize-winning but much maligned novel *One of Ours* is "far more modernist than most critics have assumed" and merits a place

alongside works by Hemingway and Remarque as a realistic account of the American experience in the "War to End All Wars."

Trout's extensive archival research presents a fascinating array of what he calls the iconography of remembrance—from private letters and pamphlet covers to battlefield memorials and public monuments like the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City. He argues that Cather was fully aware of such iconography and of the dubious attitudes toward the conflict they embodied. Trout further asserts that Claude Wheeler's romantic idealism in the latter half of the novel reflects the blending of idealism with a sense of dissolution that the iconography of the time captured and does not, as earlier critics have protested, undermine the satiric thrust of the book's first part.

Particularly germane to Trout's thesis is his focus on the cultural milieu of the Great Plains as materialism and mechanization invaded small-town America. The novel's first half, Trout writes, "confronts us with an increasingly consumer-oriented and homogenized American Midwest" that Claude resents. The people of the region, though, like Claude, have not abandoned their belief in the war as the Great Crusade. Claude's much criticized heroic last stand at the Boar's Snout thus becomes an extension of the Midwest values he embraces, not as a dreamy Francophile but as part of the "American collective." Unlike Victor Morse, who assumes an identity that would reject his Iowa roots, Claude becomes "an increasingly patriotic American soldier," truly one of ours, a representative of the Midwestern farm boys who went to war.

A strength of this important study is Trout's unbiased approach. While admitting that he believes the novel "abandons its realistic trappings at its climax," Trout objectively notes the novel's ambiguities and its shifts in point of view that are likewise reflected in the war's iconography. Presenting a detailed study of the Lost Battalion, a story Cather undoubtedly knew, Trout defends *One of Ours* as an icon of "a deeply imbedded cultural myth"

whose contradictions coincide with Americans' attempts to make sense of the war.

Equally interesting, if less extensively and effectively examined, is *The Professor's House*, a novel that Trout contends explores the war as the "thing not named." The Professor's discomfiture with modernism mirrors the nation's search for closure that commemorative forms failed to provide. Trout discerningly concludes that the "fallen soldier," Tom Outland, as opposed to Claude Wheeler, "remains consigned to an interpretive 'vacuum'" and that the memorials designed to honor him fail "to form a coherent body of myth."

*Memorial Fictions*, a superb interdisciplinary study, thoroughly researched and cogently argued, suggests new ways of reading *One of Ours* and *The Professor's House* as war literature. What this work offers that others do not is a focus on the cultural icons that surrounded Cather during her writing and that shaped her literary vision. Trout's defense of *One of Ours* as a modernist text embracing contradictory views of the time is a provocative and welcome addition to Cather studies.

MARY R. RYDER

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*Interpreting the Legacy: John Neihardt and "Black Elk Speaks."* By Brian Holloway. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003. xiv + 220 pp. Photographs, line drawings, tables, annotated bibliography, index. \$27.95.

This volume represents a feisty defense of John Neihardt's literary role in crafting the classic presentation of the voice of a Lakota "holy man" in *Black Elk Speaks*. Holloway explicitly addresses a variety of criticisms leveled against Neihardt that in one way or another accuse him of supplanting Black Elk's voice with one resonating with the biases of his own cultural and religious vision. Holloway not only provides intelligent critiques of these

charges, but also takes the reader directly to the texts behind the published text, supplying a great many photocopied pages from Enid Neihardt's typed transcriptions of her stenographic notes recording Black Elk's 1931 narration to Neihardt and from Neihardt's hand-written manuscript of *Black Elk Speaks*, displaying the literary wrestling with specific words, phrasings, and editorial choices.

Besides refuting those who would criticize Neihardt for distorting Black Elk's voice, Holloway wishes to demonstrate particular elements of Neihardt's literary genius in bringing an oral indigenous voice to authentic expression in a way that is reader-friendly for the dominant culture. Holloway claims that *Black Elk Speaks* as a text is a poetic work and not an ethnographic effort. He stresses "the narrative art Neihardt used to turn the raw material of notes and remembrance" into a finished book by employing "poetic and editorial strategies to develop the art of *Black Elk Speaks*." In pressing this claim, Holloway denigrates the literary quality of the "stringy, digressive transcripts" of Neihardt's interviews of Black Elk."

This highlighting of Neihardt's artistry risks divorcing the literary process from the original oral narrative which took place in a ritual context as empowered sacred utterance. In showing what he contends is Neihardt's poetic transformation of the transcript, Holloway asserts that "the consciousness of Neihardt and Black Elk merge in the truth of art." Clearly, Black Elk and Neihardt had mutual respect for each other's gifts of visionary understanding and visionary telling and writing, but the biculturalism of their relationship may be misconstrued by emphasizing the dominant culture's understanding of "art"—a category absent from, or alien to, indigenous cultures.

The author's title, his way of proceeding, and his scholarly objective are asymmetrical in that the role and character of Black Elk as Lakota are omitted or obscured in the effort to feature the role and literary genius of Neihardt. By stressing the literary dimension as the singular merit of *Black Elk Speaks*, Holloway leaves

the reader without guidance as to whether the result is in any way culturally relevant to contemporary Lakota people. Neither poets nor ethnographers—nor critics—may disregard the need to approach the realm of Lakota discourse with deliberate respect and to represent that discourse honestly to readers who are conditioned to see indigenous people as "the Other." By developing the Lakota side of this bicultural process, Holloway could have argued that, while Neihardt intentionally employed his literary gifts in writing *Black Elk Speaks*, he did not intend to produce "art" but to facilitate something categorically new in America—a respectful telling of religious truth purposefully addressed to the whole of humanity by an indigenous man, thereby trumping all constructions of "otherness."

DALE STOVER

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*On Teaching and Writing Fiction.* By Wallace Stegner. Edited and with a foreword by Lynn Stegner. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. xv + 121 pp. \$13.00 paper.

There have been several collections of essays by and about Wallace Stegner, but this one takes in new territory, his ideas about the teaching of creative writing and about the art of fiction. He was a teacher of writing for most of his life, first at Utah, at Wisconsin, and then at Harvard. He went to Stanford in 1945 where he founded and directed the Writing Program, a workshop format modeled after his student experience at Iowa (the only graduate writing program in the country at that time) and his summers teaching at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.

As teacher and director, he was very successful. The Stanford workshop became one of the two premier programs in the United States, a model duplicated at universities all over the country. Many of his students became successful



writers of serious fiction and nonfiction, including, among the best known, Ernest Gaines, Edward Abbey, Harriet Doerr, Robert Stone, Tillie Olsen, Scott Momaday, Raymond Carver, Judith Rascoe, Wendell Berry, Eugene Burdick, Scott Turow, Tom McGuane, Pat Zelver, Evan Connell, Larry McMurtry, Jim Houston, Ken Kesey, and Al Young. Even abbreviated, it is quite a list.

Although he didn't like spending his time on administration, Stegner was happy to be able to carry out his own vision of what a successful program should be. Reflecting his sense of democracy and the primary importance to him of talent, entrance to the program depended on a writing sample, not academic status, and there was no discrimination on the basis of age, sex, or race. Because he succeeded in getting an endowment for the program, he was then able to offer fellowships that enabled students just to write without worrying about supporting themselves. Finally, because he was an extremely successful author, he was able to inspire his students by example.

In an excellent foreword to the collection, Lynn Stegner, prominent author in her own right and Stegner's daughter-in-law, notes that "he was there to help students realize the full literary potential in their work *through* themselves as unique and uniquely evolving individuals, not to convert them to Stegner's style or Stegner's themes, or even to Stegner's dreams *for* them. Guidance, not influence, was his watchword." Writing for Stegner was nearly a sacred occupation, what is written reflecting the integrity as well as the skill of the writer. Quoting him, Lynn Stegner points to the heart of what he was as a writer and teacher: "Any work of art is the product of a total human being,' he has said; good fiction is 'dramatized belief.'"

JACKSON J. BENSON  
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*Margaret Laurence: Critical Reflections*. Edited with an introduction by David Staines. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2001. 176 pp. Notes. C\$19.95 paper.

David Staines's collection of essays by twelve distinguished scholars, critics, and writers illuminates the accomplishments of one of Canada's most acclaimed and beloved authors. Like the volume's cover photo of a young and attractive Margaret Laurence, an image unfamiliar to readers accustomed to the round face and over-sized glasses of her later years, the essays themselves, and the editor's introduction, offer fresh perspectives on Laurence's work, challenging us to view it in new ways.

This is particularly true of Kristjana Gunnars's "Listening: Laurence's Women." Gunnars compares the Manawakan female protagonists to the Canadian Prairies: "an earthquake waiting to happen, perhaps. A dam waiting to break. The stillness before the storm." Gunnars ruminates on the "stillness" and "unhappiness" of Laurence's women, expanding these qualities to include all Canadian women, artists, and writers. Her bald statement, "I have discovered that Canada is an unhappy country," is a provocative one, whatever the likelihood of her readers' agreement.

Helen M. Buss's essay proposes feminist, postcolonial readings of *The Prophet's Camel Bell* and *Dance on the Earth: A Memoir*. Retelling the painful story of Laurence's encounter in Somalia with an eight-year-old prostitute named Asha and the bitter realization that she can do nothing to help the girl, Buss accentuates the problematic disjunction that occurs when feminism and postcolonialism meet. While resolutions are difficult, Buss argues that Laurence's writing "works 'toward' the concept of a female postcolonial position for privileged, white, female cultural workers. . . ." *Dance on the Earth*, for instance, moves away from patriarchal limitations and yet is set in a postcolonial situation.

The power of Joyce Marshall's concluding essay emerges from its author's intimate knowl-

edge of Laurence and her admiration for Laurence's contributions to the Canadian literary community. Marshall acknowledges Laurence's flaws—"she had her demons," her self-doubts—but also avows that "it's perhaps not fair to put too much weight on words that slipped out . . . while she was drinking." Marshall's understanding of the personal costs accompanying Laurence's creativity and magnanimousness affirms this essay's sense of authenticity.

Focusing on the Manawaka fiction, as it should, the volume also recognizes the significance of Laurence's correspondence, autobiographical works, African texts, and children's books. It offers a comprehensive reflection that, like the cover photograph, requests us to look at Margaret Laurence anew.

SHERYL ALLEN

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*The Invention of Native American Literature*. By Robert Dale Parker. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003. xi + 244 pp. Photographs, notes, works cited, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Through the lens of historical interpretation, Robert Dale Parker presents a controversial, deconstructionist argument that the field of Native American literature has been invented by Native writers who have drawn on Indian and literary traditions in order "to theorize an Indian aesthetic" that links artistic and cultural identity. As Parker points out, however, the works of critics and early transcribers and translators in the field have also been partly responsible for this invention of Native American literature. Parker is critical of the work of early non-Native scholars who have translated oral traditional stories into poetic form because, he argues, they conflate "Indian imagination and invention with poeticality itself . . . and threatened to displace the work of actual Indian poets"; however, what he seems to take issue with is not

the poetic interpretation but the authoritativeness of the claim. In his commentary on Ray A. Young Bear's poetry, Parker argues that Young Bear derides the non-Native appropriation of Native cultures but, in keeping with Meskwaki ideas about authority, refrains from positing an authentic, authoritative idea of "Indianness" to take its place.

Parker delineates both the historical development or creation of the field of Native American literature and the creation of paradigms by that literature. In particular, he critiques four patterns that he argues have become particularly well worn and often stereotypical in Native writing and the critical commentary on it: "young men's threatened masculinity," the oral tradition and storytelling, the poetic tradition, and "Indian cultures' aloof renegotiations of what the dominant culture understands as authority."

*The Invention of Native American Literature* seeks to redirect the current theoretical and thematic foci of Native American literary studies away from the essentialist, authoritative directions of the canonical past into a more postmodern understanding of the field and its relationship to international literary studies. It is a compelling, original, meticulously researched, and strikingly honest text, and I would recommend it to anyone working in the field. Although every reader may not agree with Parker's "non-essentialist approach" or his assessments of the critical work in the field to date, his thought-provoking analyses of the relationship between the social and the aesthetic and issues of gender and representation raise questions that will have far-reaching implications for the study and teaching of Native American literature. Parker's text is also valuable for its emphases on the works of a diverse range of Native writers, including Great Plains authors John Joseph Matthews and D'Arcy McNickle, as well as Ray A. Young Bear, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Thomas King.

LORI BURLINGAME

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*The Waltz He Was Born For: An Introduction to the Writing of Walt McDonald.* Edited by Janice Whittington and Andrew Hudgins. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002. vi + 256 pp. Notes, works cited, index. \$34.95.

Advertised as an introduction to the poetry of Walt McDonald, *The Waltz He Was Born For* is also a celebration—of both the poetry and the man. Author of some twenty volumes and Poet Laureate of Texas, McDonald details a Southwest of dry hills, dark nights, tough working-class characters fiercely determined to retain their essential humanity amid trying circumstances. McDonald's poetry has always reflected his experience of the world as writer, warrior, family man, sage, and spiritual guide, counseling compassion and reconciliation. His characters—especially his men—strive to survive in a hostile and dangerous world: hence his many poems about war's makers and victims, and about solitary, isolated men defying the brutal Texas Plains by sheer perseverance. In one essay, Chris Willerton, writing about perseverance in McDonald's work, identifies the poet's central themes as survival and faith, each grounded in memory. Memory reifies both one's fiercest terrors and the spiritual sighs of relief (and release) that follow surviving them. From that collective memory, at once personal and universal, stems the resilience that informs the unconditional compassion characteristic of McDonald's best work.

McDonald's poetry really needs no introduction, but these seventeen literary-critical essays examine his life and work within the contexts of "war writing," Southwestern (and Texan) writing, religious writing, and American poetics, revealing the richly layered texture of the poet's works. Inevitably, while the essays impress upon us how much ore McDonald packs into his literary veins, they may distract readers from the gustatory, firsthand appreciation of the poet's rich words and imagery. He *says*—indeed he *sings*—what his commentators can only approach obliquely through academic prose. That is not a criticism: it merely states the difference between art and "criticism," and it sug-

gests why the best criticism points us toward *the art itself* and gets out of the way.

The book's final section, a delightful 2000 interview with the poet, demonstrates why McDonald really is something special, not just to Texas but to the American literary scene. McDonald, who has conducted countless writing workshops over his career and who confesses that he feels "lucky . . . to hang around words and see what happens," continues a brilliant teacher and mentor, even in "retirement." Given the unmistakable love of language and of life the interview reveals, it is little wonder that his work has touched so many readers with its remarkable combination of craft and humanity, artistry and insight.

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*The Extraordinary Work of Ordinary Writing: Annie Ray's Diary.* By Jennifer Sinor. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002. xiv + 238 pp. Illustrations, notes, works cited, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

"Worked hard today of course," writes Annie Ray, January 17, 1881, testifying to another day. "Ordinary writing" suggests the functional and dull: shopping lists, inventories, thank yous, and diaries, which author Jennifer Sinor likens to things we "toss" once they've outlived their use. Sinor seeks to redefine and elevate these writings, insisting that "ordinary" is not "commonplace"; their value lies in their ordering of self within a life.

Sinor employs feminist, historical, rhetorical, and literary perspectives, and counterpoints analysis with memoir, letters to living and dead, and reflective demonstrations of her own writing process. Examining a surviving volume of her great-great-great aunt Annie Ray's diary, Sinor probes the potential of the discarded. Written in the pages of a ledger book, the diary is the sole artifact through which Annie can speak.



Annie Ray epitomizes obscurity; even Sinor's description of Annie's photograph signifies emptiness: "she seems, less the center and more the hole. . . ." Annie's life on the Plains of nineteenth-century South Dakota means repetitive work, frequent separation from her husband (an itinerant blacksmith), and social isolation.

Annie's diary appears as unbroken "inter-text" between chapters, which allows the reader to experience the accumulation of her days. Sinor observes that by current definitions, such work is not "storied" text, and thus non-literary. This anti-story, full of narrative omissions, requires a different reading, Sinor claims, one that seeks to illuminate "the limitations of story." Sinor's explorations focus on "the act of writing in the days rather than of the days." This, she asserts, is the foundation from which one must read "ordinary" work. As if seeking to describe a person from her shadow, Sinor maps the negative spaces of Annie Ray's diary.

Sinor contends that the nineteenth-century ideal for women to "maintain stability and avoid disruption" is reflected in diarists' exactitude. Annie Ray's coded language—stripped of pronoun, rife with verb, yet rendered with precise numbers, amounts, or times—was a means to create "a fiction of stability" and, on paper at least, to control a life both chaotic and confining. The motley content of entries lacks context. But for Annie, notations of weather conditions, tasks performed, financial records, comments on her husband's absence, the noting of menses, states of health, and occasions of sex are experienced "wholecloth," as if they are of equal value, even as they are pieced together daily. Sinor recommends that despite absent narrative, such "ordinary" works must be viewed as "lifewriting."

Although Sinor supports her position, her text seems needlessly overdeveloped, reiterative, and structurally convoluted. Insertions of memoir seem at times purposeless or dislocated. Sinor's clearest work comes when she is

closest to Annie Ray's text. The delight of this volume is found in Annie Ray's days, which without Sinor's passionate discoveries would remain outside our view.

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*Moving Out: A Nebraska Woman's Life.* By Polly Spence. Edited and with an afterword by Karl Spence Richardson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. 225 pp. Illustrations. \$17.95 paper.

At the end of her memoir, *Moving Out*, Polly Spence assesses all the little ironies of her life and concludes, "[each] time everything seemed just right, each time I thought I'd found it all—the work, the love, and the ideal way to live—something brought change to me." Change is a central motif in her narrative, reflected in a title that underscores movement and mobility, not settlement. Spence's Nebraska life provides a toehold on the slippery surface of twentieth-century culture in America. The many changes in her life reflect the changeable decades from the 1920s to the 1970s in which many Americans moved from agrarian to urban lives.

Spence began life in the farming community of Franklin, Nebraska, where a young woman's existence centered on family, church, and respectable social events that excluded dancing. Under the demanding eye of an unbending mother, Spence resented the oppressive governance of a lingering Victorian America. Unable to express herself openly, she struggled with a "lack of identity," a condition afflicting many women she knew. Franklin was a role-driven society that placed high value on conformity. Yet a sense of instability stirred beneath the appearance of complacency: her father's printing business depended on the litigious nature of Franklin County's residents. The KKK infiltrated

Franklin in the 1920s and provoked conflict for a number of years. Many were lonely, including Spence.

When her father sold his printing shop to take up a new one in Crawford, Nebraska, Spence's life opened up. The high butte ranching country encouraged a tolerance of difference that the farming community did not. Here, Spence recalls, "the tempo and texture of life [were] different." The most momentous years of Spence's life played out among ranchers, resident Native Americans, and military men. The Depression abruptly ended her university career in Lincoln. She would marry, have children, bear the pain of her brother's and father's deaths, see a young son die as well. With her husband, Levi Richardson, Spence struggled to make their ranch survive lean years. World War II brought the first financial security they had known, and the postwar years increased opportunity for them as hunters, and then urban tourists, paid to share time on the ranch. A marriage that at first seemed full of promise and shared vision crumbled under the strain of finances, the death of young Charley, and adultery. The Crawford years of *Moving Out* present the most sustained, dramatic, and informative social history of the memoir. As postwar America seemingly pulled together with improved telecommunications, expanded highway systems, and growing transregional commerce, personal lives unraveled. Spence's final move in the memoir, to L.A., underscores the radical changes afoot in society. Undone by life at home, Spence left her rural roots and joined the great migration to urban America.

*Moving Out* makes for compelling reading, despite the hurried presentation of events once the author settled in California. Spence is an astute, thoughtful writer. Her reflections on topics ranging from family life, feminism, and work life in rural America to small-town social mores illuminate the tides of change that affected so many individuals in the last century. Karl Spence Richardson's valuable afterword provides further context for under-

standing Polly Spence's poignant journey from the Plains to L.A. *Moving Out* adds considerable distinction to the University of Nebraska Press's acclaimed *Women in the West* series and should be required reading for anyone interested in twentieth-century social history.

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University of Nebraska at Omaha

*The Road to Lame Deer.* By Jerry Mader. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xvi + 194 pp. Photographs, bibliographical references. \$25.00.

In 1922 a white physician working on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation began taking photographs of the Cheyenne people. Before his death in 1935, Thomas Marquis had amassed over five hundred photographs and published a number of significant books and articles about the Cheyenne.

By coincidence, in the mid-1970s the man who was restoring the collection was himself then traveling to the reservation at Lame Deer, Montana, in order to take photographs of Cheyenne men and women. Over a period of about three years Jerry Mader made a series of starkly beautiful portraits of about thirty people. *The Road to Lame Deer* is Mader's account—written years later—of his experiences while collecting those photographs. Mader's photographs and a small selection of Marquis's (who plays only a small role in the book) are included at the end of the text.

Jerry Mader was in his early thirties when he first took the road to Lame Deer, armed with little more than a vague hope of finding subjects to photograph. He soon met Henry Tall Bull, a handsome and generous Cheyenne man, whose help, along with that of others, allowed Mader to obtain a rare glimpse of Cheyenne life in the 1970s. Driving around the reservation in a truck held together by bailing wire, Mader attended peyote ceremonies, ate dozens of delicious

home-cooked meals, and came to know the lives of several Cheyennes.

In part, the book tells the story of Mader's friendship with Tall Bull and of Tall Bull's death, brought on by alcohol abuse. One of the book's stronger aspects is the author's struggle to come to terms with his friend's death. He muses on the long history of white and Indian relations and wonders if he is just one more white man who had bungled an attempt at reconciliation. At the core of such reflection is a hard look at personal responsibility in a world filled with hatred. At such moments his prose sings. Once in a while, however, his reflections go too far afield and take us away from the main story of Tall Bull and the stories of the other men and women Mader met.

Mader is a fine storyteller. From the biting teeth of winter's winds to the searing heat of a deathly still July afternoon, from Irene Tall Bull's quiet main room to the drunken haze of a three-day "bender," from a starlit hunting expedition to the tension of the Ashland Bar, the author's skill at creating scene is considerable. The expansive, empty hills and valleys of southeastern Montana appear almost as if we are seeing them from the open air of the back of a pickup or, better, from the back of a strong horse.

What is important is that in telling the stories of the Cheyenne people in such a convincing and well-wrought manner Mader establishes a kind of trust with the reader. We trust him to tell not an absolute truth, but the truth of what he remembers, of what he saw and felt and did. Like any good history, *The Road to Lame Deer* offers us a clear portrait of our past.

ALAN BOYE

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Lyndon State College, Vermont

*Five Shades of Shadow*. By Tracy Daugherty. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xi + 286 pp. Notes, selected bibliography. \$27.95.

The Oklahoma City bombing "informs each sentence here," Tracy Daugherty tells us, becoming the epicenter to essays aiming to "gather remains—of family, history, landscape—before they were lost." At work on a novel when the bombing occurred, a book tracing family roots in West Texas and Oklahoma, Daugherty turned to nonfiction as a means of "glancing back in order to look ahead more clearly," to probe personal and regional in relation to national history, to confront instabilities in his own life, in part, by trying to understand violent disturbance in the republic.

The result is an often affecting volume that reflects on an upbringing in the Southwest against the backdrop of Daugherty's parents' and grandparents' experience, then redirects retrospection toward prospects for the future. Among his touchstones are a grandfather's commitment to public service and belief in correspondence between public and private language; Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* as social critique and exemplar of "unironic" truth-telling Daugherty misses in recent literature; mixtures of myth and reality persisting in Merle Haggard's songs or Ralph Ellison's writing; and contending aspects of a need to revisit the heartland from his current home in Oregon, where he teaches writing.

Nostalgia may play its part, but the deeper impulse is to seek in patterns of the past the meanings for American consciousness and culture of dislocations large and small, preeminently the Oklahoma City blast. (September 11 is acknowledged but not engaged, its shock waves too recent and global scale too vast for Daugherty's focus.) Interviews with survivors and others in the region entwine with the author's self-analysis, less to deflect his personal troubles—a failing marriage, clinical depression—into a larger context of crisis (he



interrogates himself on this point) than to look for common ground, from which perhaps to be helpful to others as well as himself.

Inward inquiry is encircled by an observant outward view of the land, in its physical immutabilities but also in the ways in which its wind-scoured expanses sustain human lives, ephemeral yet enduring. Daugherty conveys a sense of the Plains, in their difference from his adopted West Coast terrain, as a constant horizon to his inner eye.

At one awkward point the author likens himself to Lear in the storm, and he sometimes sounds petulant venting academic discontents. But overall Daugherty's touch and tone are sure, as he comes to terms with contingency. The reader is welcomed into a sheltering space beneath the "Survivor Tree" in Oklahoma City, a place for "each person with a deep, private story, as well as a story here together."

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*Between Grass and Sky: Where I Live and Work.*  
By Linda M. Hasselstrom. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002. xi + 215 pp. \$24.95.

After the publication of her first book, *Windbreak*, by Barn Owl Books in 1987, Linda Hasselstrom became a small press legend. Disseminated by word of mouth, *Windbreak* established Hasselstrom as one of the best-known voices speaking on behalf of cattle ranchers on the Great Plains. In her early books (*Windbreak* was followed by *Going Over East*, which won a Fulcrum Award in 1987), Hasselstrom's persona was that of an articulate ranch woman, committed to the South Dakota community where she had grown up and to the land where she and her husband worked beside her rancher father.

Then her life fell apart. "I felt as though every word I had written to that point had

been a lie," she told an acquaintance, and the books that followed (*Land Circle* [1991], *Feels Like Far* [1999]) were marked by rage as Hasselstrom revised her personal history and altered her expectations. Now, in *Between Grass and Sky*, she's achieved some balance in her writing, and also in her life.

In her introduction to *Between Grass and Sky*, Hasselstrom makes a claim for herself as nature writer: "When my writing students say they want to be nature writers, I tell them their approach is backward; first they have to learn something about nature by getting deeply involved in it." Deeply involved, she assuredly is, in the way—recognizable by anyone with a ranching background—she knows every slope and coulee and variety of plant life on her prairie, knows every individual among the cattle bearing her brand, and knows every other living creature through close observation, right down to the mice.

If some of the essays in *Between Grass and Sky* echo her earlier work, her voice is distinct and familiar, like an old friend lecturing on cattle grazing, on garbage, on living responsibly but unsentimentally. Who but Hasselstrom could write, "I admire cows' ability to clean their nostrils with their tongues"? Who but Hasselstrom would train her cats to hunt mice in the outlying haystacks, until "the felines would follow the pickup ruts like a line of tiny cows when I headed for the bales, trotting daintily to avoid the mud"? The Hasselstrom of *Between Grass and Sky* is by turns humorous and biting; she'll put up with no nonsense, but she's generous and dependable in the way of ranch folks, and she's achieved a new equanimity. Her book is a pleasure to read.

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University of Idaho

*The American Statehouse: Interpreting Democracy's Temples* By Charles T. Goodsell. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001. xii + 226 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$35.00.

Employing three conceptual frameworks or lenses, Charles Goodsell provides an illuminating examination of the singular American architectural creation called the statehouse. He uses these lenses to offer a social interpretation of the architecture of our fifty state capitols. The first lens seeks concepts or values embedded within the building proper. The second looks at the impact of a statehouse on current political behavior. Finally, his third lens provides the broader impressions these buildings have on society in general.

Goodsell examines the relationship between state politics and the architecture that not only houses this function but provides the stage on which it is acted out. Thoroughly researched, Goodsell's study describes the historic governmental and architectural evolution of this building type, starting from our colonial period, to early nationhood, and then through two later periods of statehouse construction—essentially the six decades following the Civil War. Parallel to his evaluation of the exterior and interior form of the buildings are the political concepts and values that both unite the democratic process at the state level and help define some of the differences in each state's political and legislative procedures.

Except for the new Florida statehouse, a creation of the 1970s, however, little reference is made to the change in architectural form of the statehouse that occurred in the early twentieth century. Of the eleven states that are wholly or largely a part of the Louisiana Purchase, the three newest statehouses—in Nebraska, Louisiana, and North Dakota—were the first to incorporate an office tower within their design. Yet little mention is made architecturally or governmentally of this significant shift in built form or governmental structure. In the broader assessment of when state governments physically outgrow their historic statehouses, the statement "What was

originally a gemeinschaft relationship of intimate community under one roof . . . became a gesellschaft social model of distant communication between separate buildings" may be true in ninety percent of states where this condition exists. Goodsell did not consider, however, the ten percent of state capitols that still house the principals of all three branches of government.

*The American Statehouse* gives substance to the paraphrase of a Winston Churchill quote, well known among architects: "We make our buildings and afterwards they make us. They regulate the course of our lives." The book contributes to a deeper understanding of the multi-layered image statehouses portray. Goodsell's political and social science analyses give a different architectural perspective: how a statehouse's history, its form, iconography, interior ornamentation, and artifacts affect our lives in unique ways.

ROBERT C. RIPLEY

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*Native American Photography at the Smithsonian: The Shindler Catalogue*. By Paula Richardson Fleming. Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003. x + 371 pp. Photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, indexes. \$39.95.

This excellent volume is an illustrated reconstruction of what was probably the first exhibition of photographs at the Smithsonian. The subject matter was not the great politicians or celebrities of the times but Native Americans. Most of the photographs were of delegations that visited Washington—including numerous men from the Plains, especially representatives of the Souian peoples photographed in 1858, 1867, and 1868—and reflected the turbulent inter-cultural politics of the period.

The original exhibition catalogue on which this volume is based was compiled by photog-

rapher and artist A. Zeno Shindler, who undertook work for the Smithsonian. Paula Fleming's effective visual reconstruction of the delegations has enormous historical power. Her concern is not with the content of the photograph beyond the identification of the sitter, or with the details of wider political contexts that made the sitting possible in the first place. Rather it is a piecing together of the history of the image—how and when it was taken, in how many versions it exists, and how it was disseminated. The photographs were listed and re-listed at various times by the Smithsonian, registering shifts in information. All are carefully tracked by Fleming in a *tour de force* of research, registering the nineteenth-century attributions of the photographs and the shifts in transcription that entangle them. Through this detailed study of collecting, reproduction, and presentation, we see some of the mechanisms through which peoples of the Plains became visible and were appropriated into the discourses of science, nationhood, and the popular imagination.

These are not photographs with the glamour and aestheticism of, for instance, Edward S. Curtis or even F. A. Rinehardt. Rather there is often a strong relationship between sitter and photographer. The style as well as the mood of the portraits, especially those by the McClees Studio (1857-8), is honorific, the individuality of the sitters clearly articulated. Yet within a few years these images were circulating within the US and Europe as "native types." Similarly, Whitney's photograph of Medicine Bottle at Fort Snelling (No.179), begun as a topical political photograph—a captured leader of the Minnesota massacre of 1862—is copied by Shindler and absorbed into anthropological science as an example of race. It is the tracking of the shifts in description and consumption that makes this volume important, for it moves beyond mere image content.

My only reservation is the disappointing quality of the image printing. The rather flat middle range greys give little impression of the rich tonal qualities and vibrancy of the

original photographs. Fleming's scholarship, the original photographers, and, indeed, the original sitters deserve better. The cover is beautiful; if only all the photographs had been printed like it.

This volume is an essential reference work. Its careful editing and indexing allow approaches to the material from many different perspectives. It is surely the last word on Shindler and his project and a major contribution to the understanding of the making and use of photographs.

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*Red Cloud: Photographs of a Lakota Chief.* By Frank H. Goodyear III. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. viii + 211 pp. Photographs, map, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a deadly clash of cultures swept across the Great Plains of this continent. Perhaps no tribe resisted the Euro-American invasion more fiercely than the Lakota bands of Sioux, and perhaps no one embodied this resistance for the Euro-American public more than Red Cloud.

In *Red Cloud: Photographs of a Lakota Chief*, Frank H. Goodyear III focuses on the last thirty-seven years of Red Cloud's life, when his role as a leader of the Oglala Lakota shifted from military to diplomatic. In that time Red Cloud appeared in at least 128 photographs, eighty-one of which are presented chronologically in Goodyear's book. About fifteen illustrations are also included.

Goodyear admits in his introduction that using photography for historical biography is a non-traditional methodology, but postulates that it can provide unique insights into a person, as well as shifts in cultural relations. Because the rise of photography coincided with Red Cloud's life as a diplomat, and because he



was so widely photographed, Red Cloud is the perfect subject on which to test this theory.

Those who would like an analytical method for studying photographs would do well to read Goodyear's book. In fact, there is a benefit in using photographs as biography that Goodyear does not mention: one can study the sources directly oneself, along with the author. For the most part Goodyear objectively points out what is notable in each photograph, and just as importantly he gives historical contexts surrounding the photo sessions.

For Goodyear, Red Cloud's willingness—or even eagerness—to be the subject of the dominant society's intruding eye stemmed from two major motivations: to help bridge the gap between the conflicting cultures of the Euro-Americans and his own people; and to maintain his roles as leader and advocate for the Oglala. Goodyear also speculates on the motivations of the Euro-Americans who created and demanded these photographic records, which most often but not always ran contrary to Red Cloud's goals.

The photographs in the book are reproduced nicely, each one aligned with its corresponding description. Goodyear writes concisely and convincingly, and includes thorough notes and a helpful bibliography. More than another coffee table book or another biography, *Red Cloud: Photographs of a Lakota Chief* offers sharp insights into a major persona of the Great Plains, and into the new and foreign technology in which he confided.

JOEL MINOR

Archivist

Oglala Lakota College

*Texas Rangeland*. Photography by Burton Pritzker. Text by Renée Walker Pritzker. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. 144 pp. Photographs. \$39.95.

*Texas Rangeland* presents an unusual series of photographs of cattle interspersed with commentary by ranchers asked to discuss what they

saw when they looked at the images. Burton Pritzker made the photographs; his wife, Renée Walker Pritzker, collaborated by collecting and editing the text of the conversations. The result offers readers a curious blend of materials. The ranchers respond not only to the photographs but recount their own memories and discuss ranching as a disappearing way of life. This provides a background to the photographer's dramatic visual responses to cattle.

The burden of interpretation falls on readers through a purposeful withholding of contextual information. The dialect and simple phrasing of everyday speech are preserved in conversational quotes. Except for a general list of names in the acknowledgments, however, there is no attempt to identify in the text who said what by name, date, or place. Similarly, there is no statement by the photographer. The titles of his photographs, in a lists of plates, consist of simple identifications, such as "Bull #1, High Plains."

Many of the photographs are cropped tightly at a close distance and are intentionally ambiguous. Through formal arrangement and unconventional printing they transform "ordinary" subjects such as cattle into surreal and dreamlike images that undermine our assumptions. An uneasy kind of romanticism creates a dramatic visual and conceptual dislocation that we must search through on our own. We are invited to experience cattle, the landscape, and the changing demographics of contemporary rural life in new ways. By extension, perhaps we are also being challenged to reconsider how the history and mythology of ranch life have conditioned our expectations and understandings of it thus far.

Although the volume's missing contextual information about the photographs and quotes may seek to emphasize "artistic" or "literary" instead of "literal" connotations, it is really not necessary to remove such information to produce such effects. Photographs and quotes, by their very nature, always take things out of context, and the details they present already function as both fact and symbol. The missing information simply would have added to the

complexity and contradictory tensions that are already compellingly present in the work.

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*The Roots of Texas Music*. Edited by Lawrence Clayton and Joe W. Specht. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003. xiii + 235 pp. Photographs, figures, notes, index. \$29.95.

*The Roots of Texas Music* is a collection of nine essays focusing on Texan contributions to such American musical traditions as jazz, country, blues, classical, Gospel, "Chicano," polka, and zydeco. Gary Hartman's introductory overview of Texas music history is the longest and among the best of the collection's chapters. His coverage of Native American music (including the only specific reference to the Great Plains), French music, and a brief mention of rock and roll presents three musical styles not included in any of the more in-depth studies that follow.

Dave Oliphant's chapter on jazz is a concise survey of the contributions Texans have made to jazz history and also provides new information since the publication of his *Texan Jazz* (1996). Joe W. Specht's essay on country music traditions is well researched and a fresh approach to the topic. Two chapters providing an often neglected perspective on Texas music are Larry Wolz's "Roots of Classical Music in Texas: The German Contribution" (Wolz is the only music historian among the contributors) and Kenneth Davis's "Make a Joyful Noise: Some Popular Religious Music in Twentieth-Century Texas." The book concludes with one of the strongest chapters, Roger Wood's "Black Creoles and the Evolution of Zydeco in Southeast Texas."

John Lightfoot's "Early Texas Bluesman" is among the weaker essays. Regrettably, Lightfoot relies heavily on liner notes and ignores (or is not aware of) Alan Govenar's important *Meeting the Blues* (1995) and (with Jay

F. Brakefield) *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* (1998). Carolyn F. Griffith's chapter on Czech and Polish music fails to mention Adolph Hofner, the "King of South Texas Swing." Nor does Griffith appear to be aware that Arhoolie Records has issued a recording of Baca's Original Band (Arhoolie CD 7026).

José Angel Gutiérrez's "Chicano Music: Evolution and Politics to 1950" is the weakest essay of the collection and arguably a disservice to the history of *música tejana*. Gutiérrez's glaring political agenda could indeed be a springboard for debate, but for what was intended as a survey of the history of Texas-Mexican music, his essay falls short.

Lawrence Clayton's initial objective for *The Roots of Texas Music* was to "bring a fresh look to the subject of Texas music," writes Joe W. Specht, who became co-editor of the collection shortly before Clayton's death in December, 2000. Despite the shortcomings listed above, the better essays do indeed fulfill Clayton's objective.

KEVIN E. MOONEY  
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University of Texas at Austin

*Texas Trilogy: Life in a Small Texas Town*. By Craig D. Hillis with Photographs by Bruce F. Jordan. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. xxvii + 178 pp. Photographs, index, compact disc. \$29.95.

That music has the power to captivate the human imagination and propel individuals into new areas of research is beautifully illustrated by Craig D. Hillis's *Texas Trilogy: Life in a Small Texas Town*. Inspired by the content of three songs composed by folksinger Steven Fromholz, Hillis first interviewed Fromholz, then visited the small Texas town Fromholz immortalized in his "Texas Trilogy." What Hillis found in Kopperl, in Bosque County, Texas, was not some unique and special place, but rather the very bedrock of the American

people and their dreams. Kopperl and its residents exemplify the quintessential small-town American experience. Like thousands of other small Great Plains towns, Kopperl depended on farming and ranching; the town thrived during the great cattle drives of the 1870s, fairly burst with possibilities when the railroad arrived in the 1880s, barely survived the Great Depression, and finally slipped into decline when the train no longer stopped there. But Kopperl and Bosque County, Texas, were saved from oblivion by a budding poet-composer, Steven Frumholz, who spent his summers there with his grandmother, and by historian, Craig D. Hillis, who heard Frumholz's songs and recognized a compelling subject for a book.

As with all good song texts, Frumholz's "Texas Trilogy" merely suggests the place and its people, leaving much interesting detail for Hillis to add in his book, one of the assets of which is its sharp focus on Bosque County's inhabitants—their perceptions and recollections, their joys and sorrows, their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes. And as we read about these people, we can view

them and their artifacts in beautiful photographs prepared by Bruce F. Jordan; some are old, others new, but all speak volumes about life in Bosque County, Texas.

The strengths of this book are many, including the accompanying CD that allows readers to hear Frumholz sing his "Texas Trilogy" and absorb the emotional feel of the place and its people even before entering Hillis's clear and absorbing text. One of the volume's few problems is its emphasis on specific immigrant groups, such as the Norwegians, at the expense of others, like Mexican-Americans, in the founding of Bosque County. A second flaw is the lack of attention to art, music, and entertainment in Bosque County. This is not a book intended for the professional historian, however, but the general reader seeking information about the roots of the American people. In this capacity it is admirably successful.

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## BOOK NOTES

*Deadly Dozen: Twelve Forgotten Gunfighters of the Old West* by Robert K. DeArment. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. 266 pp. \$29.95.

Historian Robert K. DeArment has compiled the stories of twelve infamous gunfighters from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Feared in their own times but little known today, those profiled are John Bull, Pat Desmond, Mart Duggan, Milt Yarberry, Dan Tucker, George Goodell, Bill Standifer, Charley Perry, Barney Riggs, Dan Bogan, Dave Kemp, and Jeff Kidder.

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*Reporting the Resistance: Alexander Begg and Joseph Hargrave on the Red River Resistance.* Edited by J. M. Bumsted. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2003. Map, photographs, appendix, notes. 288 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Though factual accounts of the 1869-70 Red River Resistance are hard to find in eastern Canadian newspapers, Alexander Begg and Joseph Hargrave were two correspondents who wrote regularly to the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Herald* from the remote Red River settlement. J. M. Bumsted has brought together their two accounts and added historical background and additional information about the Red River Resistance.

\* \* \*

*The Pony Express: A Photographic History.* By Bill and Jan Moeller. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003. Color photographs, map, sites of interest, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$22.00 paper.

In this pictorial history of the Pony Express, the authors follow the trail from East to West with stories and pictures from each of the states along the way. An appendix contains a list of all the stations in use during the brief history of the Pony Express.

\* \* \*

*Custer: A Photographic Biography.* By Bill and Jan Moeller. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003. Color photographs, maps, sites of interest, bibliography, index. \$24.00 paper.

Using one hundred color photographs and three maps, Bill and Jan Moeller document the life of Custer from his childhood in Ohio, through Civil War battlefields, to his death at the Little Bighorn in Montana.

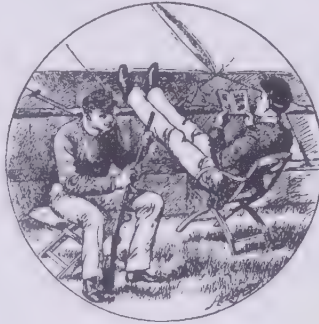
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*The Way of the Warrior: Stories of the Crow People.* Edited by Phenocia Bauerle, compiled and translated by Henry Old Coyote and Barney Old Coyote Jr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. Photographs, map, figure, notes, glossary, index. xxvi + 129 pp. \$24.95.

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2005 Symposium of the International Quilt Study Center will address the theme of "Collectors, Collecting, and Collections." The Symposium will be held at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln, February 24-26, 2005. Scholars and artists are invited to submit proposals for papers and panel presentations that explore the phenomenon of collecting, and especially collecting quilts and related arts, from a variety of perspectives. These may include but are not limited to psychological, aesthetic, historical, economic, anthropological,

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## CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Washington State University, in Pullman, Washington, will host a conference on the theme: "Honoring the Heritage of the Plateau Peoples: Past, Present, & Future," September 29-30, 2004. The Native American Advisory Board to the President and the College of Liberal Arts invite elders, tribal leaders, scholars, students, researchers, educators, and other professionals and interested community members to participate. The conference will explore the



historical and contemporary social, political, educational, health, and economic status of the Plateau Tribes, as well as the preservation of language, culture, history, and cultural and natural resources of the Plateau peoples. Proposals for papers, individual or panel presentations, performances, art exhibitions, poster sessions, and project exhibit tables that relate to the above topics will be accepted through April 15, 2004. Proposals that are accepted will be notified by May 15, 2004. For additional information about proposals and registration, please contact: Mary Collins, Coordinator, Plateau Conference Planning Committee, (509) 335-4314, <collinsm@wsu.edu>. Website: <<http://www.libarts.wsu.edu/plateauconference/call.html>>

## NEW LEWIS & CLARK PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

The Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has a limited edition publication on the official commencement of the National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commemoration: *Monticello and Jefferson's West: Inaugurating the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 2003-2006*, sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. Edited by Gary E. Moulton, the publication contains presentations delivered on January 18, 2003, at Monticello, Virginia, including remarks by Ken Burns, President George W. Bush, and James P. Ronda. Contact the Center for Great Plains Studies for more information: (402) 472-3082, <cgps@unl.edu>.

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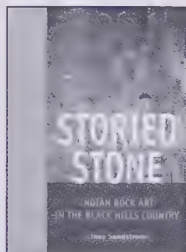
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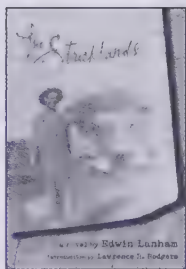
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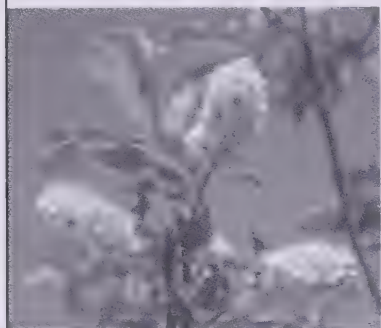


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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

SPRING 2004

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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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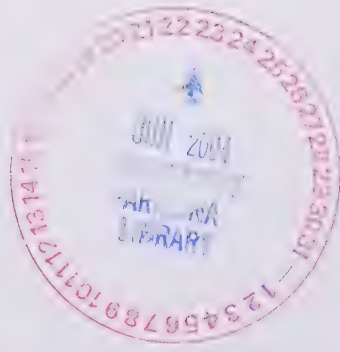
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# RANGERS, MOUNTIES, AND THE SUBJUGATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 1870-1885

ANDREW R. GRAYBILL

During the 1840s and 1850s, more than 300,000 traders and overland emigrants followed the Platte and Arkansas rivers westward across the Central Plains, the winter habitat of the bison. The rapid environmental degradation of this area had the effect of driving the bison to the extreme Northern and Southern Plains, where white hidehunters slaughtered the animals.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-1870s indigenous peoples at both ends of the grasslands, in places such as the Texas Panhandle and the upper Missouri River valley, fiercely defended the dwindling herds in an attempt to avoid starvation.<sup>2</sup>

KEY WORDS: Blackfoot, Canada, Comanche, Cree, Kiowa, North-West Mounted Police, Texas Rangers

*Andrew R. Graybill, a visiting assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is completing a book manuscript on the Texas Rangers and the Canadian Mounties. For their assistance with this article, he thanks Fran Kaye and Pete Maslowski.*

The Indians' predicament was not theirs alone, however, as Native efforts at self-preservation posed a significant threat to Euro-American plans for the frontier. To that end, government officials on the peripheries of the Great Plains developed a remarkably similar strategy: the use of mounted constabularies to pacify indigenous peoples. Indeed, the North-West Mounted Police were created and the Texas Rangers renewed and reorganized in the early 1870s specifically to address the pressing "native question" confronting Texas and western Canada, among the few places where bison still roamed after 1870. Of course, authorities in Austin and Ottawa relied on other armed forces to wrest control of their hinterlands away from indigenous peoples—most notably the US Army and the Canadian militia—but no two groups rendered more effective service in this regard than the Rangers and the Mounted Police.<sup>3</sup>

Few scholars have situated the efforts of these constabularies within the context of the rapidly changing conditions for Indians on the Great Plains after 1865. Studies of the Rangers tend to regard their post-Civil War anti-Indian vigilance as merely the continuation

of an inevitable conflict between incompatible cultures, while Canadian historians have overlooked the more coercive dimensions of the Mounties' duties, especially in the 1870s.<sup>4</sup> An examination of the two forces, however, reveals that both Austin and Ottawa called on their rural police to manage indigenous populations facing societal collapse, and that the constabularies responded in similar fashion: by controlling or denying the Natives' access to the bison.

Though fought almost entirely to the east of Texas, the Civil War was nevertheless costly for the state, as it lost some of its leading antebellum political figures.<sup>5</sup> More disturbing, perhaps, was the recession of the frontier, a byproduct of the manpower needs of the Confederacy, which had left Texas unable to defend itself from Indian attacks, long a feature of Anglo-Native relations in the state. Given the instability of the Civil War era in Texas, the violence of this period was among the worst that the state's population had yet endured, with one historian estimating that over 400 residents were killed, wounded, or taken captive between 1862 and 1865 alone.<sup>6</sup>

With the end of the war, however, Austin turned its attention once again to the nagging problem of Native depredations, which, if anything, seemed to be growing worse after 1865. In north Texas, settlers complained frequently of Kiowa and Comanche raids emanating from the Indian Territory just across the Red River.<sup>7</sup> It would be difficult to overstate the anxiety caused in Austin by such missives, as state officials worried that the violence, if unchecked, would halt migration to west Texas, a concern voiced explicitly by a number of whites.<sup>8</sup>

Texans were not alone in their dire assessments of the circumstances along the frontier, as several federal officials dispatched to the region commented on the adverse effects of Native violence on white settlers. One such observer was Lawrie Tatum, the Indian agent at Fort Sill in the Indian Territory. Tatum, however, sounded a slightly more optimistic

note than did Texas residents, noting that the Comanche responsible for the raids were "fast passing away," and that unless they soon chose a more civilized path, "it is not likely they will last much beyond the present generation."<sup>9</sup>

Tatum's letter is particularly useful in evoking the climate along the state's northern and western frontiers, for it suggests that white settlers were not the only residents of the Southern Plains experiencing great hardships following the Civil War. Like many of the settlers, though, Tatum seems not to have recognized the powerful correlative relationship between the sufferings of both Anglos and Indians at this time. White insecurities stemmed directly from the Natives' own dilemmas and shaped Austin's strategies to secure the Texas frontier.

The Comanche who raided in northern Texas during the nineteenth century were descendants of the group's eastern branch, which had migrated to Texas from present-day Colorado in the mid-eighteenth century. The Kotsoteka—or "buffalo eaters"—hunted elk, black bear, deer, and antelope, but as their name suggests, their principal means of subsistence was the bison.<sup>10</sup> By the early 1800s the Kotsoteka were in full control of the bison-hunting grounds below the Canadian River, and Comanche bands ranged as far into Texas as the Hill Country, located in the central part of the state.<sup>11</sup>

Hunting alongside the Comanche were the Kiowa, who—despite cultural and linguistic differences—had forged an extremely close alliance with the Comanche during the late eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Like the Comanche, the Kiowa inhabited the grasslands south of the Arkansas River, developing a cultural and economic reliance on the region's bison, whose numbers—estimated by Dan Flores at approximately eight million—must have seemed inexhaustible to the Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Such was not the case, however.

By the early 1860s a combination of human and ecological factors had reduced the number of bison.<sup>14</sup> Compounding matters for the Indi-



FIG. 1. This bison cow and her calves—photographed in the 1890s in Canada's Banff National Park—were among the few remaining buffalo on the Great Plains in the late nineteenth century, as the vast majority had been killed off by changing ecological conditions and especially human predation. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NC-27-11.

ans was the fact that white settlement and expansion into the Central Plains had pushed the dwindling herds into Texas, which had expelled the Comanche from their reservation on the Brazos River in 1859.<sup>15</sup> Caught between a scarcity of game and the brutal tactics employed by the US Army in defending railroads and Euro-American settlers, the Kiowa and Comanche—with estimated populations in the late 1860s of 2,000 and 4,000, respectively—met several times with federal representatives, hoping to establish peace and to chart a course for Native survival.<sup>16</sup>

Treaty negotiations also provided Indian leaders a chance to vent their frustrations with US policy, as captured in a speech by Eagle Drinking, a Comanche chief, at the 1865 pro-

ceedings on the Little Arkansas River. In response to Commissioner J. B. Sanborn's proposal that the Comanche and Kiowa cede lands north of the Canadian River and accept settlement on a reservation in the Indian Territory, Eagle Drinking replied: "I am fond of the land I was born on. The white man has land enough. I don't want to divide again."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, in exchange for a supposedly permanent hunting ground in far northwestern Texas, Eagle Drinking, among others, signed the treaty on October 18, 1865.

As the Comanche and Kiowa were to discover, however, peace negotiations often promised more than they delivered. For instance, while the bands who signed the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek believed that the



agreement had guaranteed them exclusive access to the hunting grounds below the Arkansas River, the treaty never expressly forbade Euro-Americans from entering the area. Thus, the white hidehunters who poured into the Texas Panhandle after 1870 drove to the brink of extinction the very herds of bison on which the Indians had pinned their own hopes of self-preservation.<sup>18</sup>

Frustrated by the disappearance of the bison and exasperated by the perceived duplicity of federal officials, as many as two-thirds of the Kiowa and Comanche—including those who had previously accepted treaty obligations—ventured into Texas during the late 1860s. While their primary objectives no doubt were bison and the horses needed to hunt them, many Indians also increased their attacks on white settlements with the intent of driving off those who would endanger their access to the diminishing herds.

These were the bands of raiders so bitterly described by Euro-Americans along the Texas frontier in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Seeking a definitive end to the conflict and the promotion of further Anglo migration, the Texas legislature passed a bill in June 1870 authorizing the institution of a "Frontier Force." This act had the effect of reestablishing the Texas Rangers, who had lapsed into irrelevance during the Civil War and Reconstruction and were replaced with the state police by a skeptical Republican administration.<sup>19</sup> Four years later, this detachment of Rangers was reorganized into the six companies of the Frontier Battalion and charged with containing "marauding or thieving parties" of Indians.<sup>20</sup> Their mission was relatively straightforward: to drive Native Americans from within the borders of the state beyond the reach of the resources on which their survival depended.

Considering that after the Civil War the United States had committed significant military resources to Texas for the purposes of frontier defense—including one artillery, three cavalry, and four infantry regiments—one is tempted to ask why state administrators felt it

necessary to resuscitate the Rangers.<sup>21</sup> There are two answers. In the first place, the Rangers were revered within Texas as Indian fighters par excellence, a reputation that dated back to the brutal campaigns led by Capt. John Coffee Hays against the Comanche in the 1840s.<sup>22</sup> Faced now with a level of Indian violence not seen since those days, Texans looked to the Rangers once more to deliver them from "the many tribes of savages" along the frontier, a job for which they seemed uniquely qualified.<sup>23</sup>

Archival records suggest that the Rangers were indeed well suited to the task of Indian conquest. For one thing, the overwhelming majority of the men who served in the Rangers had come to the force from rural parts of Texas, the Plains states, and the South, and as such very likely had experience with Native Americans, something the Rangers themselves considered of inestimable value.<sup>24</sup> As one captain who fought in west Texas noted: "The US Troops don't understand the character of these Indians, nor are they acquainted with the character of the country. My men are all frontiersmen, thoroughly acquainted with the whole country and well versed in [their] machinations and tactics."<sup>25</sup>

But beyond their storied history and famed expertise, the Rangers were called upon by Austin and celebrated by the citizenry because they were enthusiastic in executing the state's Indian policy. For instance, although there were approximately 4,500 federal troops serving in Texas at any given time after the Civil War, the 450 Rangers of the Frontier Battalion engaged Indians in battle on more than one-third as many occasions as their army counterparts between 1865 and 1881.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, though possessing only one-tenth of the army's manpower in the state, the Rangers killed half as many Indians as the federal troops did over the same period (82 to 163, respectively) and managed to wound two more (26 to 24).<sup>27</sup>

As important as the reputation of the Rangers was to their reestablishment in the 1870s, perhaps more significant was the fact that public officials and private citizens alike had little

faith in the US Army detachments sent to protect them from Kiowa and Comanche raiders.<sup>28</sup> For one thing, Texans were convinced that the military presence was simply too small and scattered to make much difference in the event of an Indian attack. The most frequently repeated complaint regarded the distance between army posts, which afforded huge gaps through which Indians could enter the state.<sup>29</sup> Part of the problem, in the eyes of Texas observers, was that authorities in Washington DC habitually underestimated the Indian dangers along the state's frontiers. To be sure, federal officials did have their doubts about the dire conditions reported in Texas, as exemplified by an 1871 visit from Gen. William T. Sherman to Fort Richardson, which he made with the express purpose of debunking the Texans' anxieties. Sherman believed the hysteria little more than a ruse intended to draw federal troops away from Reconstruction duty, although he changed his mind after narrowly escaping a mixed party of Kiowa and Comanche raiders near the Salt Creek Prairie.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps more vexing than the army's apparent inability to defend them, however, was the sense among many Texans that the federal government was simply not committed to a policy of total Indian removal from the state. For their part, Austin officials in the post-Civil War period had clearly determined that Anglos and Indians could not coexist within the boundaries of Texas, as evidenced by the collapse of the state's two reservations within five years of their 1854 establishment, and the exile of all remaining Natives to the Indian Territory.<sup>31</sup> Washington, on the other hand, had settled on President U. S. Grant's so-called "peace policy," a less confrontational plan that sought diplomatic solutions to Anglo-Native conflicts, like the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek that allowed Indians the right to hunt buffalo in the Panhandle.

This federal moderation, Texans believed, had infected the military detachments stationed in the Southern Plains. Though capable of striking with indiscriminate ferocity—as seen at the Washita River, Summit Springs, and the

Marais River—the army seemed just as likely to display a peculiar quality of restraint. For instance, soldiers in Texas rarely followed up their smaller victories with decisive engagements, belying the genocidal bent often ascribed to them by modern historians.<sup>32</sup> Limited perhaps by the tenets of the peace policy or preferring instead to wage a war of attrition, the US Army did not attempt the complete removal of Indians from the state during the 1870s, and on occasion even allowed Natives to remain within its borders after the Natives' defeat in the Red River War of 1874-75.<sup>33</sup>

Such decisions drove Texans to distraction, like the citizens of Donley County, who in 1878 complained to Austin that "the few United States troops stationed in the Pan Handle are totally inadequate to cope with the present danger." Instead of asking for more US soldiers to come to their relief, however, the people of Clarendon begged for a Ranger squad to "aid us in our present distress."<sup>34</sup> With the failure of the Red River War to end the Indian presence in Texas, state officials heeded these requests, relying increasingly on the state police to accomplish what Washington could not—or would not—do.

As most of the defeated Natives had returned to their agencies in the Indian Territory by the summer of 1875, federal officials in the region declared that peace (if perhaps an uneasy one) reigned in the area. As an indication of Washington's confidence that conflict on the Southern Plains was over, the army reduced its troop strength in Texas, diverting extra forces to the Northern Plains, where the United States faced stiff opposition from groups of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Blackfoot Indians resisting the same white encroachment that had triggered the Red River conflict.

Texans, however, were not nearly so sanguine about conditions along their northern and western frontiers, as Indians still crossed into the state periodically in search of game to augment their meager rations. For instance, Judge Emanuel Deibbs of Wheeler County in the Panhandle wrote to Austin in June 1879 that "a band of Pawnees came through this

Co. creating a great deal of excitement, and almost resulting in a serious difficulty with them."<sup>35</sup> Although the Indians returned to their reservation without incident, the message was clear: the problem of Indians in north Texas was by no means resolved, despite the end of the Red River War.<sup>36</sup>

The Rangers would certainly have agreed with this sentiment. Adj. Gen. William Steele commented that perhaps the only perceptible difference between the periods before and after the Red River War was that "during the past year [1875], the Indian raids have been by small parties, who depended upon their adroitness in concealment, rather than in their strength, for safety."<sup>37</sup> Overall for the period between August 1875 and December 1877, Steele reported that fifty-seven Indian parties had entered the state, killing forty citizens and making off with nearly 900 horses and mules.<sup>38</sup> Where had all the Natives come from? wondered Texans from Austin to the small towns scattered along the growing frontier.

As it turned out, many of the Kiowa and Comanche bands chased by the Rangers had passed into the state with the consent of soldiers stationed both in Texas and the Indian Territory. Complaining to military officials of starvation on their agencies, Indian chiefs sought permission for hunting parties to cross the Red River, which by that time was the last refuge of the bison on the Southern Plains. The soldiers, motivated in part by expediency—reducing starvation could alleviate the tensions posed by confinement on the reservations—but also by compassion, often complied with these requests.

Such was the case with Lt. A. M. Patch, who described his encounter with a band of Indians near Fort Elliott in 1879. As Patch explained, the group's leader "complained bitterly of his Agency, saying that his people did not get enough to eat there, and that he did not want to go back until he found buffalo [and that] he did not intend any mischief." Impressed with their good disposition, Patch released the Indians on the condition that if the Indian sent back to the reservation by the

chief for a valid hunting pass did not return, the group would immediately depart the state.<sup>39</sup>

Texans, predictably, complained vociferously about this practice, believing that the incursions of the Native hunting parties were merely the prelude to another major conflict in the region. As one citizen in Brown County explained to Gov. O. M. Roberts in February 1879, "[T]here was now on Texas soil over one thousand 'Indians,' pretending that their mission was 'hunting,'" adding that there was "great danger of an outbreak, in the Spring, on our frontier."<sup>40</sup> Such threats presented dire implications for the nascent stock-raising industry of west Texas, which residents hoped would bind the area to more developed parts of the state.

For their part, military officials defended their actions, insisting that settlers greatly exaggerated both the size and frequency of such Indian forays while flatly dismissing Anglo claims of alleged "outrages" committed by the Natives.<sup>41</sup> Although some commanding officers attempted to ameliorate the situation by promising to send military escorts along with Indian hunting parties, others explained that troop reductions made this practice largely infeasible.<sup>42</sup> Bvt. Maj. Gen. John Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri and a noted advocate of fair treatment for the Indians, evinced less patience for the Texans' complaints, explaining that "insufficient subsistence" by the government made bison hunts "absolutely necessary."<sup>43</sup>

Abandoned by the federal government, Austin turned to the Rangers for help in settling the state's Indian question once and for all. The police did not disappoint, resolving, it seems, to pursue with ferocity every Native band trespassing in the state. Such grim determination emerges in an 1878 letter from Lt. G. W. Arrington, who wrote to Adj. Gen. John B. Jones, Steele's successor as adjutant general, that he had heard rumors of several Indian bands camped just across the state line in Wilbarger County. Volunteering to intercept them, Arrington added that he was "satisfied we can bring back scalps with us."<sup>44</sup>



More significantly, the Rangers aimed to cut off the Fort Sill Indians from any access to the state's remaining bison, believing that this tactic would deter Natives from entering Texas and would cause the federal government to seal the borders. Jones went so far as to claim in an 1879 letter that there were no bison or game of any kind in northwest Texas—surely an exaggeration—in the hopes that Pope and his men might put a stop to the crossings.<sup>45</sup> When this failed to solve the problem, the Rangers adopted more radical measures, which brought them into direct conflict with Washington and the military establishment.

Tensions ran highest in the Panhandle, where a small number of whites had established profitable stock-raising operations that they believed were endangered by the continued Indian presence. Seeking to protect these ventures by driving off Natives in search of bison, Ranger detachments squared off against military officials in the region. One such encounter took place in June 1879, when Arrington traveled to Wheeler County—on the border between Texas and the Indian Territory—to investigate the complaints of local ranchers.

Arriving in the town of Sweetwater, Arrington was accosted by Gen. John W. Davidson, who accused the Rangers of foolishly trying to bring on “a merciless and useless war.” When asked by the general if he would kill any Natives he encountered, Arrington replied that he “most assuredly would if they were armed.” Vowing to protect the Indians of the Panhandle, Davidson said he would not allow “an armed mob to be travelling through the country,” and ordered his men to fire upon the Rangers if they disturbed any Natives.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps the most explosive encounter between Rangers and soldiers of the US Army took place earlier that year. Moved by the desperate conditions facing a band of Kiowa and Comanche who had left Fort Sill in search of food, Nicholas Nolan, a captain in the Tenth Cavalry, arranged for the group to cross into Texas with a military escort.<sup>47</sup> A squad of Rangers patrolling along the Red River discovered

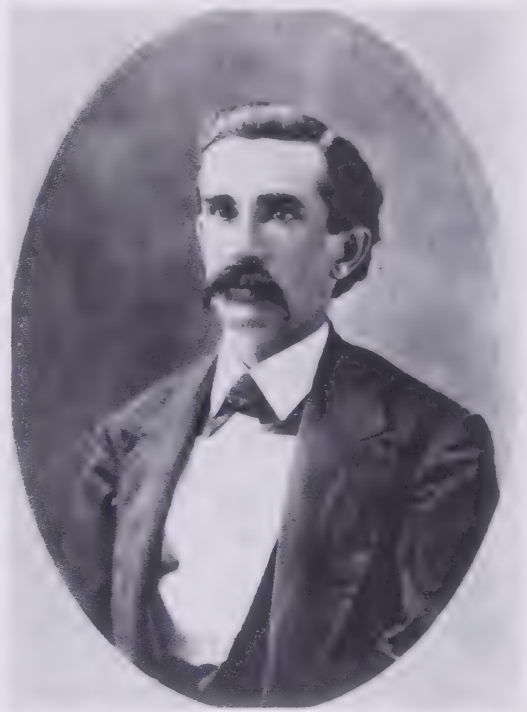


FIG. 2. As commander of the Frontier Battalion and later as Adjutant General of the State of Texas, John B. Jones directed many of the Ranger efforts to remove Native Americans who crossed into the state during the 1870s. He died in 1881 at age 47. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

the party, and “without any provocation” attacked the Indians—killing Sunboy, a Kiowa chief—despite the clear presence of the accompanying ten-man military detachment, an action that set off a bitter quarrel between Nolan and the Ranger commander.<sup>48</sup>

While these efforts were no doubt successful in driving the Indians from Texas, the Rangers received substantial help from both houses of the U.S. Congress. Troubled by the continuing violence in Texas, and persuaded, perhaps, by the impassioned appeals of the state's representatives in Washington, Congress approved a bill in the spring of 1880 that expressly prevented reservation Indians from entering any part of Texas. Most telling was the sentence that concluded section 1 of the act, which read, in part, that “any officer or

agent of the Army or Indian Bureau who shall violate this law shall be dismissed from the public service."<sup>49</sup>

Native Americans did not disappear entirely from the state after 1880, although the greatly reduced demand for Ranger anti-Indian duty suggests how complete their removal efforts—with an assist from Congress—had been. The near-total disappearance of the bison and the continued vigilance of the Rangers had made Texas virtually uninhabitable for Indians by the dawn of the 1880s, as Adj. Gen. W. H. King noted in his annual report for 1882: "Practically, there is very little use for any Rangers so far as danger from Indian raids is concerned," a notion that would have been unthinkable even two years before.<sup>50</sup>

To be sure, there were sporadic reports of Indian sightings by rail crews in west Texas around this time, but when investigated by the Rangers—who would stop by the camps for a day or two—such scouts usually turned up very little.<sup>51</sup> Ironically, it was this much less violent Ranger assignment (the supervision of rail camps) that delivered the final blow to Native resistance in Texas. By keeping a close watch on track and grading crews in the trans-Pecos region, the Rangers facilitated the extension of the all-important iron roads, which brought with them, into even the farthest reaches of the state, the white settlers of Austin's aspirations.

At the other end of the Great Plains, Canadian officials in the early 1870s did not face the same troubling reality of Indian-white conflict that their Austin counterparts did, largely because of sparse Euro-Canadian settlement north of the forty-ninth parallel.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Ottawa's fears of such violence were hardly less intense, for the august goals of the new National Policy—especially the construction of a transcontinental railroad and the promotion of Euro-Canadian migration—would languish if confronted by systematic Indian resistance.<sup>53</sup> Before settlers could establish homesteads and entrepreneurial ventures on the prairies, Ottawa needed assurance

that white migrants would suffer no harm at the hands of potentially defensive Natives.

These official concerns were not unfounded, as suggested by reports arriving in the capital from Canadians already on the Plains. Although the federal government had laid the groundwork for peaceful westward expansion by negotiating treaties in 1871 with bands of Ojibwa and Swampy Cree Indians in southern Manitoba, Ottawa had made few inroads among the Native groups farther west who inhabited the territory between Lake Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains. These Indians, particularly the Cree and Blackfoot peoples, deeply resented the growing Euro-Canadian presence in their midst, and insisted that settlers and surveyors first obtain Native permission before venturing onto their lands.

The Cree Indians, so vehemently opposed to Canadian expansion, occupied the southeastern Plains of the Dominion's frontier, an area on either side of the border separating the present-day provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Their ancestors had migrated to this territory from the Great Lakes, and once on the Plains the woodland Cree acquired horses and gradually abandoned trapping in favor of hunting buffalo, which had become the central element of Cree existence by the early 1800s. With an 1860 population of approximately 12,000, the Cree were the largest single indigenous group on the Canadian Plains, and they controlled the fertile hunting grounds along the Battle and North Saskatchewan rivers.<sup>54</sup>

The principal rivals of the Cree for both horses and access to the bison were the estimated 10,000 Indians comprising the three groups of the Blackfoot Confederacy: the Blood, Peigan, and Blackfoot proper.<sup>55</sup> Described by one historian as "the strongest and most aggressive nation on the Canadian prairies" after the mid-eighteenth century, the Blackfoot claimed the area to the southwest of the Cree hunting grounds, a region that straddled the international boundary between the Dominion and the United States.<sup>56</sup> Given the expansionist ambitions of the Blackfoot

Confederacy, hostilities with the powerful and proximate Cree were a regular feature of Blackfoot life until 1870, when the groups treated for peace.<sup>57</sup>

By that time, both the Blackfoot and the Cree faced greater problems than the horse-raiding expeditions launched by one people against the other. In the first place, in 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company had sold the vast North-West Territories to the recently founded Dominion of Canada, leaving the status of the region's Indians in doubt.<sup>58</sup> More distressing to the Natives, however, was the rapid decline in the area's bison population, accelerated—as in the south—by white hidehunters. Already pressured by the Indians themselves, as well as the Métis—the mixed-blood descendants of European trappers and Indian women—the once great herds had been pushed to the far western edge of the Northern Plains by the early 1870s.<sup>59</sup>

Keenly aware of the threat to their existence posed by the land transfer and the disappearance of the bison, the Cree and Blackfoot looked upon white newcomers with great skepticism. As one Hudson's Bay Company trader explained to the lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories in 1871, a deputation of Cree chiefs had come to see him at Edmonton, where they sought "to ascertain whether their lands had been sold or not, and what was the intention of the Canadian Government in relation to them." The trader enclosed a message from Sweet Grass, a Cree chief, that began in part, "We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them."<sup>60</sup>

The Blackfoot were no less concerned by the growing white encroachment. As explained by Constantine Scollen, an Oblate priest traveling among the Indians in the mid-1870s, "The Blackfeet are extremely jealous of what they consider their country, and never allowed any white men, Half-breeds [Métis], or Crees to remain in it for any length of time." Compounding Blackfoot anxieties, Scollen explained, was the advent of the North-West

Mounted Police among the Natives, as the Indians believed that the police had come not only to establish law and order, "but also to protect white people against them, and that this country will be gradually taken from them without any ceremony."<sup>61</sup>

Fueled by these anxieties, the Cree and Blackfoot sought to preserve their nomadic existence by challenging the outsiders who arrived in their territory without Native consent and who killed or scared off the dwindling game on which Indian survival depended. Ottawa, on the other hand, was no less resolved to promote its own agenda for the area, and turned now to the North-West Mounted Police for help in resolving the impasse. Unlike the Rangers, however, the Mounties' mission—as described by Deputy Prime Minister Hewitt Bernard—was essentially a nonviolent one: "[T]o give confidence to peaceable Indians and intending settlers."<sup>62</sup> This the police would accomplish through negotiation.

Before considering the role of the North-West Mounted Police in facilitating treaties between Ottawa and the Plains Indians, it is worth asking why the federal government chose this approach to begin with, instead of adopting more confrontational methods. One factor, at least in western Canada, was the long history of Hudson's Bay Company control there. Company traders had cooperated with and supported many Indian groups, which had served no doubt to foster some degree of trust between Natives and whites. Ottawa hoped to capitalize on these relationships as it extended its power into the prairies. As important was the Canadian government's dedication to the treaty-making process, which as historian Jill St. Germain explains, had survived largely intact since the days of the Proclamation of 1763.<sup>63</sup>

Practical considerations dictated a peaceful plan of action as well. Even had the Canadian government chosen to conduct an aggressive campaign against the Blackfoot and Cree, there was a more immediate obstacle than the Dominion's diplomatic obligations: Ottawa simply did not have the money needed



to implement such a strategy. For instance, during the 1870s the United States spent nearly \$20 million each year on its Indian wars, but Canada's entire budget for the same period was only \$19 million.<sup>64</sup>

The Mounties were an obvious choice to initiate the treaty process, as they were the Dominion's principal representatives in the area and had been sent west by Ottawa expressly to make contact with Native groups and to obviate any possible conflicts between Indians and whites.<sup>65</sup> Charged now by the government with laying the groundwork necessary for treaty negotiations between Canada and the Plains Indians, the Mounted Police sought to establish diplomatic relations with the Blackfoot and the Cree, and to win the confidence of the Indians' most influential chiefs. To that end, the police distributed gifts of blankets, tobacco, tea, and ammunition.<sup>66</sup>

By all accounts, the Mounties' initial efforts were a great success. Describing a meeting between the Mounties and a group of Blackfoot Indians, Father Scollen exclaimed, "All honor I say to the 'Mounted Police,' who have been able to inspire with such confidence these poor members of humanity." For their part, according to Scollen, the Indians had graciously received the hospitality of their "new white friends, and the assurances of more peaceful days in future."<sup>67</sup>

Despite the progress in Canadian-Indian relations facilitated by the Mounted Police and the fact that the Cree and Blackfoot had for several years petitioned Ottawa to meet with them, many chiefs assumed a diffident posture when treaty commissioners actually arrived in the West in 1876 and 1877. As Alexander Morris, lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories, explained after receiving several Cree delegations at Fort Carlton, "[T]hey dreaded the treaty; they had been made to believe that they would be compelled to live on the reserves wholly, and abandon their hunting."<sup>68</sup>

Although Morris assured the Indians that "we [do] not want to take that means of living from you," he went on to sketch a scenario

that would indeed circumscribe, if not eliminate, Cree access to the bison, saying that "if a man, whether Indian or Half-breed, had a good field of grain, you would not destroy it with your hunt."<sup>69</sup> Even more unambiguous indications of the government's designs for the Plains Indians appeared in the boilerplate of the "numbered treaties," the accords by which Canada obtained title to every acre of the prairies. The wording of the agreements granted the Indians the right to roam over the lands they had ceded "excepting such portions of the territory as pass from the Crown into the occupation of individuals or otherwise."<sup>70</sup>

Maintaining access to the hunting grounds, however, was of little consequence to the Indians if there were no bison on the prairies to hunt. While many Cree and Blackfoot chiefs revealed their willingness to try farming if the bison disappeared, Native leaders made it clear to the treaty commissioners that they preferred a nomadic existence for as long as possible and urged the government to preserve the bison. By the time the governing council of the North-West Territories took up the matter in 1877—implementing measures aimed at limiting Indian but not necessarily white predation—the herds had dwindled so significantly that the measure was quickly repealed the following year.<sup>71</sup>

In the end, the bison's near-extinction and the seeming inevitability of white settlement led many Cree and Blackfoot chiefs to sign Treaties Number Six and Seven in 1876 and 1877, respectively, despite their misgivings. In addition to the presents the commissioners gave them, the Indians were convinced to "sell" their lands to the government by guarantees of annuity payments in perpetuity, the supply of farm implements and requisite agricultural instruction, as well as promises of education for Native children. In this way, Ottawa's plans for inducing Natives to move onto reserves closely mirrored similar efforts by US officials.<sup>72</sup> Also of critical importance in encouraging the Indians to sign, it seems, was the role of the North-West Mounted Police, which had sent detachments to all of the treaty proceedings.

Straight-backed and clad in scarlet tunics, their presence lent prestige and a certain measure of royal authority to the ceremonies, although their influence probably derived more from their own gift offerings and their vigilance in containing unsavory American traders. As Crowfoot, leader of the Blackfoot nation, said during the negotiations for Treaty Number Seven: "If the Police had not come to the country, where would we be all now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed, of us would have been left to-day. The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter. I am satisfied. I will sign the treaty."<sup>73</sup>

Although the completion of the Blackfoot Treaty in October 1877 had, in effect, severed the Indians' last remaining link to the Plains, simply extinguishing Native title in the West had by no means solved Canada's Indian "problem." After all, Ottawa had promised, albeit with qualifications, not to impede Native access to bison hunting grounds, and the treaties made Indian occupation of their allotted reserves strictly voluntary. The drawbacks of such an arrangement—that is, one in which the Plains Indians were free to continue a nomadic existence—soon emerged.

Government observers, while recognizing the Indians' determination to continue hunting bison, knew also that the herds were on the brink of extinction, and they worried about managing Canada's indigenous populations once the buffalo were gone. Considering that the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway was imminent, and that with its construction would come thousands of workers and settlers, the government believed it imperative to eliminate any threat posed by nomadic Indians to the white newcomers by removing the Natives from the prairies. Once again, Ottawa turned to the Mounties, who sought to end the dependence of the Plains Indians on the bison.

A critical if seemingly indirect step in this direction was the Mounties' attempts to eliminate the liquor trade in the North-West Territories, which experienced explosive growth



FIG. 3. In 1877, as the head chief of the Blackfoot, Crowfoot helped negotiate Treaty No. 7, an agreement that ceded the southern portion of present-day Alberta to the new Canadian nation. In his remarks, Crowfoot noted that the benevolent presence of the Mounted Police had invested him with the confidence necessary to sign the accord. Courtesy of the Glenbow Archives, NC-29-1.

after the Hudson's Bay Company ceded its lands to Canada in 1869. With no legal injunctions against the sale of alcohol in the North-West Territories, white traders prohibited from selling liquor in Montana poured across the international boundary and established forts with colorful names such as "Whoop-Up," "Slide-Out," and "Standoff."<sup>74</sup> At the posts, Euro-Americans did a booming business in buffalo robes, even after the great herds had started their precipitous decline.<sup>75</sup>

Indians supplied many of these hides in exchange for liquor, which introduced great social disorganization in Native communities.<sup>76</sup> Natives intoxicated by vast quantities of whiskey—often spiced with tobacco, molasses, pepper, and ginger to heighten its effects—died in horrific numbers, with one missionary

estimating that forty-two otherwise healthy Blackfoot men had perished in drunken brawls or by freezing to death in the winter of 1873-74 alone. Still, the Indians came regularly to trade hides for liquor.<sup>77</sup>

Concerned by the turbulence in the North-West occasioned by alcohol, with the Cypress Hills Massacre in 1873 only the most notorious example, Ottawa armed the North-West Mounted Police with a mandate to crush the region's liquor traffic, which the Mounties sought to do upon their arrival in the West.<sup>78</sup> Police vigilance, however, had a more practical side to go along with its ostensibly humanitarian objectives. As the minister of justice explained in an 1874 letter to his counterpart at the ministry of the interior, the liquor trade "has had the effect of demoralizing the Indians and retarding all efforts toward civilizing and quieting them," so that "little can be done towards inducing settlers to go into that valuable section of the country."<sup>79</sup>

Given Ottawa's plans for "civilizing and quieting" the Natives—which involved the Indians taking up homesteads and learning how to farm—officials saw that stopping the liquor trade could go a long way toward weaning Indians off of the bison and thus ending Native nomadism, as alcohol was a consequence of and continued inducement to the robe trade.<sup>80</sup> Morris, in fact, made federal intentions and the importance of the Mounted Police in implementing those plans explicitly clear to the Cree in 1876, during the deliberations at Fort Pitt that preceded the signing of Treaty Number Six.<sup>81</sup>

The Mounted Police worked tirelessly to extinguish the sale and consumption of alcohol in the North-West Territories throughout the 1870s. Statistics from the latter part of the decade, when such record-keeping by the Mounties began, indicate that liquor-related offenses constituted a significant percentage of total police arrests and prosecutions: 13 percent in 1878, 24 percent in 1879, 23 percent in 1880, and 14 percent in 1881.<sup>82</sup> The majority of these cases concerned the importation of liquor or its sale to Indians, although

the police also went after the Indians themselves.<sup>83</sup>

No less important to Ottawa in ending Indian nomadism were the Mounties' efforts to eliminate horse theft by Indians, especially raids on Native camps lying across the border in the United States. For bison-hunting peoples like the Cree and Blackfoot, horses were indispensable, as they greatly facilitated the hunting of bison while allowing Native bands to transport their families and belongings across vast distances in the Plains.<sup>84</sup> But beyond these economic motives, horses also served a social purpose as well. The size of a Native man's horse herd, as well as the quality of his mounts, were critical factors in determining a warrior's status in the community.<sup>85</sup>

In order to build and maintain their herds, small bands of Cree and Blackfoot warriors regularly attacked the camps of rival Native groups. Although they certainly stole from each other, the Cree and Blackfoot often targeted herds controlled by groups to the south, in contiguous parts of the United States. The Cree, for instance, frequently poached from Mandan and Hidatsa camps located in the Dakota Territory, while the Blackfoot coveted steeds belonging to the Crow and Flathead, Montana groups who lived to their southeast and southwest, respectively.<sup>86</sup> As with the horses themselves, these raids served social as well as economic purposes, for success in warfare lent prestige to young men seeking advancement in their communities.

Mounted Police reports from the late 1870s and early 1880s confirm the central importance of horse theft to the Indians of the Northern Plains, and the growing international dimensions of the raids during this time period. Most vexing to the Mounted Police was the fact that Canadian Indians considered areas north of the international boundary as something of a safe haven, referring to the forty-ninth parallel as the "medicine line," and believing that they were immune from punishment once they had crossed it. Ottawa worried that such incidents might be unproductive of cordial diplomatic relations with Washington.<sup>87</sup>



However, considering that in the overwhelming majority of such cases Indians stole from other Indians, and with little attendant violence, one is led to ask why the Mounted Police worked so hard to eradicate the problem. The answer, it seems, hinges on the recognition by Canadian officials that, as with the liquor trade, putting a stop to Native horse theft would severely impair the Indians' ability to maintain a nomadic existence.<sup>88</sup> It stood to reason that a dearth of horses would clearly complicate the bison hunt, while simultaneously removing both a means of and further enticement to Native mobility. Moreover, denying Indian access to horses obviated their need to cross the international boundary, serving to further circumscribe the Indians' nomadic behavior.

Ironically, despite the best efforts of the Mounties in crushing the liquor trade and curtailing Native horse theft, the provision—rather than the denial—of access to the buffalo spelled the end of Native nomadism in the Canadian Plains. Following their arrival in the West, the Mounties used their influence, as well as the power of federal law, to prevent conflicts between Native groups. While this certainly had its positive effects for Cree and Blackfoot communities, it also precluded them from defending their hunting grounds from outsiders such as whites and Métis, a fact noted with some concern by the Blackfoot in deliberations for Treaty Seven.<sup>89</sup>

Whether this was a calculated strategy intended to deprive the Indians of their life source—akin to the policy of noninterference adopted by the United States in the 1870s—is unclear; police sympathy for the Indians' plight seems to suggest that it was not.<sup>90</sup> What is certain, however, is that this "tragedy of the loss of the commons," in combination with the Mounties' more deliberate attempts to control Cree and Blackfoot access to the bison, accelerated the economic collapse of Plains Indian societies in the Canadian West.<sup>91</sup> With few or no bison north of the international boundary after 1881, and rapidly shrinking numbers in the Montana river valleys

below—where the Indians were forbidden from hunting, anyway—the Cree and Blackfoot retreated to their reservations and the prairies fell finally and firmly into Ottawa's possession.<sup>92</sup>

Although there were episodes of Native unrest in Texas and western Canada after the early 1880s—most notably, Canada's North-West Rebellion of 1885, although this was more an affair of the Métis than either the Cree or Blackfoot—by that time white settlement and industrial development proceeded apace at either end of the Great Plains. Observers in both capitals attributed this state of affairs to their rural police, crediting them—in remarkably similar language—as having served as the "vanguard of civilization."<sup>93</sup>

There were, however, real and significant differences between the forces with regard to their policing of indigenous peoples, the most obvious of which turns on the Rangers' liberal use of violence by comparison to Mountie restraint. Several factors may help to explain this. In the first place, the Mounties arrived on the prairies in 1874, charged with creating optimum conditions for white newcomers, well in advance of their arrival. Moreover, as explained by historian Roger Nichols in his comparative study of Indians in the United States and Canada, the power of the North-West Mounted Police to manage both military and civil affairs may have simplified Ottawa's Indian policy in the West.<sup>94</sup>

In Texas, by contrast, the Rangers inherited a tradition of police service based on the armed protection of a continually expanding frontier, one long marked by bloody encounters between Anglo-Texans and Native peoples. Rather than entering portions of north and west Texas in order to lay the physical, legal, and diplomatic groundwork necessary for Euro-American occupation as the Mounties had done, the Rangers traveled to flashpoints of conflict along an already settled frontier, seeking to defend territory that Anglos had tried to conquer. For Nichols, it is this difference in settlement patterns between the US

and Canadian Wests that explains—more than any other factor—the higher levels of violence in the United States, and not “any superior policy or more careful handling of Indian-related issues by Canadian officials.”<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps the central feature in explaining Ranger brutality and Mountie nonviolence hinges on the fact that one was a state force and the other a federal one. The Republic of Texas gained admission to the United States in full possession of its lands, and after the failure of its Indian reservations in the 1850s was free to handle its Native peoples as Austin saw fit. This entailed driving Kiowa and Comanche into adjacent states and territories, where the Indians then became a problem for Washington to solve.

The Mounted Police, by contrast—as agents of a federal government committed to larger, national goals and one keenly aware of the newfound global scrutiny that came with nationhood—did not have such an aggressive option at their disposal. Moreover, they were bound by Ottawa’s diplomatic and financial constraints in their handling of Canada’s indigenous peoples. The Mounties could not simply drive the Cree and Blackfoot across the international boundary into Montana, nor could they wage a costly and inevitably controversial war against them.

These divergences should not obscure the powerful similarities linking the efforts of the two constabularies throughout this period. The central mandate governing both the Rangers and the Mounties during the late 1870s and early 1880s was identical: to prevent Native populations from interfering with white migration and the establishment of Euro-American military and political authority at their respective ends of the Great Plains. In each case, the police focused their efforts on denying Indian access to the bison. The Rangers accomplished this by closing the borders of Texas to Indian outsiders and by attempting to exterminate those Natives who managed to cross into the state to hunt bison. The Mounties employed more indirect and less vicious strategies—attacking the liquor trade,

curtailing horse theft, and preventing intertribal warfare—which destabilized Native reliance on the buffalo.

These are critical differences, to be sure. After all, it is difficult to imagine a Kiowa or Comanche leader offering the Rangers anything but scorn and hostility, in marked contrast to Crowfoot’s effusive praise for the Mounties at the signing of Treaty Number Seven. And yet by the mid-1880s, the bleak conditions of reservation life facing the Kiowa and Comanche strongly resembled the poverty and starvation afflicting the Blackfoot and Cree on their reserves. Considering that in both instances it was largely police vigilance that had produced such results, the insistence by many Canadian historians that the North-West Mounted Police afforded gentle treatment to the Natives it controlled seems, in fact, to be no sure thing at all.<sup>96</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Elliott West, *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 13-50.

2. Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 123-63. For more on the Canadian bison, see William Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1996): 33-52.

3. S. W. Horrall, “Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force for the Northwest Territories,” *Canadian Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (June 1971): 181. The Rangers, on the other hand, split into two divisions four years after their 1870 reinstatement, with the larger Frontier Battalion combating Indians in the northern and western sections of the state. See Charles M. Robinson III, *The Men Who Wear the Star: The Story of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Random House, 2000), 168-204.

4. For the Rangers, see Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (1935; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), especially 3-15; Robinson, *The Men Who Wear the Star*, 155-81; and Robert M. Utley, *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105-42. For the Mounties, see R. C. Macleod, *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 143-

61. Although John Jennings, among others, recognizes the use of force by the Mounted Police against Indians, he argues that such strategies only emerged in the early 1880s, with the advent of the so-called pass system that required Natives to seek permission before venturing off of their reserves. See his study, "The North-West Mounted Police and Canadian Indian Policy, 1873-1896" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1979).

5. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 404-10.

6. Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 149-52.

7. See, for example, petition from San Saba County to E. M. Pease, October 5, 1868, in Dorman H. Winfrey and James M. Day, eds., *The Indian Papers of Texas and the Southwest, 1825-1916* (1966; Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995), 4:289.

8. Letter from P. Gallagher to E. J. Davis, January 24, 1870, in Winfrey and Day, eds., *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:297.

9. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1871, House Executive Document 1, 919-20.

10. Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1998): 494; W. W. Newcomb, *The Indians of Texas: From Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 160-63.

11. Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800-1850," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (September 1991): 469; Thomas Kavanagh, *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective, 1706-1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 136.

12. For more information on the Kiowa, see Blue Clark, *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights and Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Hugh D. Corwin, *Comanche and Kiowa Captives in Oklahoma and Texas* (Guthrie, OK: Cooperative Publishing, 1959); and Jane Richardson, *Law and Status among the Kiowa Indians* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1940).

13. Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy," 471.

14. See Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*; and Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy."

15. Newcomb, *Indians of Texas*, 358.

16. For Kiowa population estimates, see *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, 1869, House Executive Document 1, 826-27. For the Comanche, see Kavanagh, *Comanche Political History*, 471-73.

17. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 1865, House Executive Document 1, 717.

18. Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 124.

19. See Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 155-67; and Frederick Wilkins, *The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers, 1870-1901* (Austin: State House Press, 1999), 1-24.

20. H. P. N. Gammel, ed., *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, vol. 8, pt. 1 (Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1898), 86-91.

21. Thomas T. Smith, "US Army Combat Operations in the Indian Wars of Texas, 1849-1881," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (April 1996): 509.

22. See Frederick Wilkins, *The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845* (Austin: State House Press, 1996), 71-90.

23. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1875*, Texas State Library and Archives (cited hereafter as TSLA), Austin, 3-4.

24. A rare sample of demographic information on some sixty recruits reveals that forty-five of them—or 75 percent—listed farmer, ranger, cowboy, or ranch hand as their previous occupation, with the most common states of former residence (besides Texas) including Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee. See Frontier Battalion Enlistment Rolls, 1877-83, Adjutant General Records (cited hereafter as AGR), Ranger Records, TSLA, Austin, box 401-1160, folder 21.

25. Letter from Telesforo Montes to William Steele, September 15, 1875, TSLA, AGR, General Correspondence (cited hereafter as GC), box 401-393, folder 11.

26. There were 135 Indian battles involving federal troops for this period, and 54 in which the Rangers took part. See *Special Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, September 1884*, TSLA, 52; Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 503.

27. *Special Report of the Adjutant General of Texas, September 1884*, TSLA, 52; Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 527. Yet another measure of Ranger brutality emerges in the small number of Indians they took as captives. Whereas US Army records indicate that 214 Indian women and children were taken prisoner in post-Civil War skirmishes in Texas, the corresponding figure for the Rangers was six, suggesting that killing was preferred to captivity as a method of removal.

28. For an excellent discussion of the army as a less-than-effective frontier police force, see Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

29. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1875*, TSLA, 3; letter from J. W. Throckmorton to E. M. Stanton, August 5, 1867, in Winfrey and Day, *Texas Indian Papers*, 4:236.

30. Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 166-67. For another example of federal skepticism regard-



ing Texan Indian reports, see letter from Lt. J. W. Davidson, Tenth US Cavalry, to assistant adjutant general, January 11, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

31. Two Indian reservations were established in Texas in 1854: the first, on the Brazos River, was to be used by the smaller remnant tribes (Delawares, Shawnees, Tonkawas, Wichitas, and Caddoes); the other, about forty miles away, was set aside for the Comanches. Poor management coupled with Anglo-Texan hostility to the concept, however, forced the reservations to close less than five years later, with the remaining Indians moved to Indian Territory and their lands declared "abandoned" and thus available for white homesteading. See Newcomb, *Indians of Texas*, 354-58, and Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, vol. 8, pt. 1, 376-79.

32. Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 529.

33. The Red River War began in the late spring of 1874 when Indians of the Southern Plains attempted to drive Euro-American hidehunters out of the Texas Panhandle. The Natives were dealt a crushing defeat by the US Army at Palo Duro Canyon in September, and most returned to their reservations by the following spring. For the best single-volume account of the conflict, see James L. Haley, *The Buffalo War: The History of the Red River Indian Uprising of 1874* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

34. Letter from citizens of Clarendon, Donley County, unaddressed, December 30, 1878, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-394, folder 8.

35. Letter from Judge Emanuel Deibbs to O. M. Roberts, June 11, 1879, Texas Adjutant General Records (cited hereafter as TAGR), Center for American History (cited hereafter as CAH), University of Texas at Austin, box 2Q401, folio 13.

36. For other examples of settler complaints at this time, see *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1878*, TSLA, 35-36.

37. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1876*, TSLA, 3.

38. Report of Indian depredations, January 1, 1878, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:399.

39. Letter from A. M. Patch, Fourth Cavalry, to post adjutant, January 22, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 2.

40. Letter from I. B. Sadler to O. M. Roberts, February 3, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:412.

41. Letter from J. W. Davidson, Tenth Cavalry, to assistant adjutant general, January 11, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

42. See telegram from E. O. C. Ord to O. M. Roberts, February 13, 1879; telegram from T. M. Vincent to O. M. Roberts, February 13, 1879; and telegram from Davidson and E. R. Platt to T. M.

Vincent, February 17, 1879, all in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:416-18.

43. Letter from J. Pope to O. M. Roberts, April 2, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:421-22.

44. Letter from G. W. Arrington to John B. Jones, December 18, 1878, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:405-6.

45. Letter from John B. Jones to O. M. Roberts, February 15, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:417.

46. See letters from G. W. Arrington to John B. Jones, June 18 and 21, 1879, and letter from Benjamin Williams, John Donnelley, and J. W. Husselby to Gov. O. M. Roberts, undated, all TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 13.

47. Letter from Nicholas Nolan to post adjutant, January 8, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

48. Letter from J. A. Wilson to assistant adjutant general, January 17, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 2; letter from G. W. Arrington to J. B. Jones, January 20, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:409-10.

49. House Resolution 5040, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:443-44.

50. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, December 1882*, TSLA, 26-27.

51. For examples, see letter from S. A. McMurry to W. H. King, September 15, 1881, TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 12, and letter from G. W. Baylor to W. H. King, September 30, 1881, TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 12.

52. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 137. For a brief but excellent account of the interactions between Natives and newcomers in the region, see Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal Peoples and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

53. For more on the National Policy, see Hugh G. J. Aiken, "Defensive Expansionism: The State and Economic Growth in Canada," in Hugh G. J. Aitken, ed., *The State and Economic Growth* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1959), 79-114.

54. See John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).

55. The name "Blackfoot" comes from the Indians' term for themselves, *Sik-sik-a*, meaning "black foot" or "black feet," which likely referred to their moccasins, either because they were painted black or discolored by prairie fires. The Bloods were known also as the *Kai-nai*, or "many chiefs," while "Peigan"—or *Pi-kuni*—translates into "scabby robes." This last group was divided into north and south divisions, with the former living in southern

Alberta and the latter in northern Montana. It is worth noting that Indians and scholars north of the US-Canadian border use the term "Blackfoot"—which I have adopted—while those on the American side use the plural "Blackfeet." See Hugh Dempsey, "The Blackfoot Indians," in R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 385-87. In describing the relationships between the three groups, one scholar has explained that "A common language, common customs, a tradition of common origin, and frequent inter-marriage prevented open warfare between them, despite frequent feuds; against their own enemies they presented a united front. Yet even in their own eyes the union was too imperfect to require a common name, and the use of the term Blackfoot to cover all three tribes was really an unwarrantable extension by the early whites." Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (1932; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 319.

56. *Ibid.*, 317.

57. John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet; Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958); 260-61. Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 116-18. In a sense, this détente paralleled the situation in the south-central United States, where a grand alliance of Comanches, Kiowas, Southern Cheyennes, and Southern Arapahoes emerged in the 1840s.

58. The legislation providing for the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company territory—known also as "Rupert's Land"—contained several provisions designed to weaken Indian resistance to white settlement in the North-West Territories, the most important of which empowered Indian Affairs officials to remove the Natives' elected leaders "for dishonesty, intemperance or immorality." See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (1989; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 197-98.

59. William Dobak has argued that by the 1870s, Canadian Indians killed annually one-third more buffalo than they needed, in large part to satisfy the demands of the trade in bison robes. See Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo," 52. See also Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 111-13. For more on the Métis, see Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

60. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto: Willing and Williamson, 1890), 169-70.

61. *Ibid.*, 248-49. Scollen exaggerated when he claimed that the Blackfoot barred the entry of

whites into their territory, as American, Canadian, and European traders had lived among the Blackfoot for years.

62. Letter from Hewitt Bernard to minister of the interior, May 30, 1874, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa (cited hereafter as NAC), Record Group (cited hereafter as RG) 10, vol. 3610, reel C-10106, file 3461.

63. Jill St. Germain, *Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 1-12.

64. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 210.

65. See Horrall, "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force."

66. See letter from E. A. Meredith to J. A. Provencher, August 27, 1875, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, file 333.

67. Letter from Constantine Scollen to James Macleod, June 24, 1875, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 7, file 362.

68. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 183.

69. *Ibid.*, 218.

70. *Ibid.*, 285-86.

71. Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 278-79. The law prohibited the use of buffalo jumps or pounds (tactics employed only by the Indians) as well as the slaughter of calves under the age of two, which were especially prized by the Natives for the soft, supple hides from which they fashioned robes for their children. See Hugh Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 78-79.

72. For an excellent account of such similarities, see Hana J. Samek, *The Blackfoot Confederacy, 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and US Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

73. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 272.

74. For more on the development of the liquor trade in the Rocky Mountain northwest, see Paul Sharp's classic *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955).

75. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1877, X, vol. 7, no. 9, "Report of the Secretary of State of Canada for the Year Ended 31st December, 1876," Appendix D, North-West Mounted Police, 25.

76. For more on the liquor trade among Indians and its deleterious social effects, see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

77. Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 35, 258.

78. Often cited (erroneously) as the reason for the deployment of the Mounted Police, the Cypress Hills Massacre took place in southern Alberta in 1873. Convinced that a group of Assiniboiné Indians

had stolen their horses, a party of Montana wolf trappers ambushed the Natives in retaliation. In a carefully planned attack, the wolfers descended on the drunken and unsuspecting camp, killing sixteen men, women, and children and mutilating their corpses. News of the massacre was widely reported throughout the region. See Robert S. Allen, "A Witness to Murder: The Cypress Hills Massacre and the Conflict of Attitudes towards the Native Peoples of the Canadian and American West during the 1870's," in Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds., *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 229-46.

79. Letter from S. A. Darion to minister of the interior, May 28, 1874, NAC, RG 10, vol. 3610, reel C-10106, file 3461.

80. For more on the relationship between liquor and the trade in animal furs and hides, see Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 69-96.

81. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 240.

82. William Waiser, *The North-West Mounted Police in 1874-1889: A Statistical Study* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979), 32.

83. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880-81, vol. 3, no. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 31st December, 1880," Part 2, North-West Mounted Police Force, Commissioner's Report 1880, 32. For examples—albeit from a later period—see letter from J. H. Moodie to officer commanding at Battleford, March 3, 1893, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 82, file 346; and report of E. G. Wood for November 1894, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 92, file 190.

84. For more on the importance of horses to Plains Indians, see Preston Holder, *The Horse and the Hoe on the Plains: A Study of Cultural Development among North American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 89-137; and Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 39-47.

85. John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 240-56.

86. See *ibid.*, 171-215; and Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 69-82.

87. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880-81, vol. 3, no. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 31st December, 1880," 7, 15-16, 31-33.

88. Brian Hubner makes this point in "Horse Stealing and the Borderline: The NWMP and the Control of Indian Movement, 1874-1900," in William M. Baker, ed., *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society, 1873-1919* (Winnipeg: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 53-70.

89. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 271.

90. For evidence of police compassion, see letter from James Macleod to R. W. Scott, November 17, 1876, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 9, file 69.

91. Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in the Canadian West," in Getty and Lussier, *As Long as the Sun Shines*, 203-28.

92. It is worth noting that in the late 1870s, the North-West Mounted Police allowed select bands of Indians to cross into Montana to pursue whatever bison they could find, alleviating the Natives' starvation and saving the government thousands of dollars in rations they otherwise would have provided to the Indians. The US Army, however, forced these groups of Canadian Indians back across the international boundary, which effectively ended the practice. See letter from L. N. F. Crozier to J. Johnston, December 6, 1879, NAC, RG 10, vol. 3705, reel C-10123, file 17962.

93. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1883, vol. 10, no. 23, "Annual Report of the Minister of the Interior for the Year ended 30th June, 1882," Part II, North-West Mounted Police Force, Report of the Commissioner 1882, 12-13; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, February 28, 1882*, TSLA, 30.

94. Roger Nichols, *Indians in the United States and Canada: A Comparative History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 223.

95. *Ibid.*, 220.

96. See for instance, Macleod, *North-West Mounted Police*, 143-61; John Jennings, "The Plains Indians and the Law," in Hugh A. Dempsey, *Men in Scarlet* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 50-65; and Desmond Morton, "Cavalry or Police: Keeping the Peace on Two Adjacent Frontiers, 1870-1900," in Baker, *Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, 3-16.



# "THIS STRANGE WHITE WORLD"

## RACE AND PLACE IN ERA BELL THOMPSON'S AMERICAN DAUGHTER

MICHAEL K. JOHNSON

Aboard a train heading out of Minneapolis toward frontier North Dakota, Era Bell Thompson in her autobiography *American Daughter* (1946) describes a landscape that grows steadily bleaker with each mile farther west: "Suddenly there was snow—miles and miles of dull, white snow, stretching out to meet the heavy, gray sky; deep banks of snow drifted against wooden snow fences. . . . All day long we rode through the silent fields of

snow, a cold depression spreading over us." Thompson's realistic winter landscape descriptions also allegorically represent the social situation of herself and her family. The phrase "this strange white world," which she uses to describe the view from the train window, refers to both natural and social environments. "Aren't there any colored people here?" her mother asks. "Lord, no!" responds her father, who has preceded the family to North Dakota. As the only black child in her school, Thompson soon discovers the difficulty of her situation in this strange white world: "When they . . . called me 'black' and 'nigger' . . . I was alone in my exile, differentiated by the color of my skin, and I longed to be home with the comfort of my family; but even with them I would not share my hurt. I was ashamed that others should find me distasteful."<sup>1</sup>

In *American Daughter*, the changed appearance of the physical world signals the crossing of the border from such settled and urban areas as Minneapolis to a frontier space recently opened for homesteading, and from a sense of belonging to an African American community to a sense of "exile" in a predominately white western settlement. Richard Slotkin

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argues that frontier narratives emphasize an opposition between "the frontier" and "civilization," or the "wilderness" and the "metropolis," that often falls along a geographical divide between the wild, unsettled American West and the urban East.<sup>2</sup> Thompson revises this traditional opposition of frontier literature—the essential difference between the wilderness and the metropolis—to symbolize what W. E. B. Du Bois describes as "double-consciousness," the psychological tension and turmoil the African American individual experiences as he or she attempts to maintain a sense of belonging to two worlds, one black, one white.<sup>3</sup> Gerald Early comments that Du Bois "saw blacks as being caught, Hamlet-like, between" the choice of living as "an assimilated American" or as "an unassimilated Negro."<sup>4</sup> In *American Daughter*, the metropolis represents the black world, the place of African American community and culture. Moving west to the frontier means assimilating into mainstream society, separating from the black community, and becoming part of a strange white world.

Although the role of black Americans in settling the West has not always been adequately acknowledged, contemporary historians are rapidly filling in the details of African American contributions to westward expansion—from the work of black soldiers and cowboys to the community-building efforts of groups of black settlers. According to Quintard Taylor, census data reveal that black cowboys had a widespread presence in the American West. In the late nineteenth century, the Exodusters became part of a wave of black migration that helped settle Kansas. When the Oklahoma Territory opened to settlement in 1889, "an estimated 10,000 blacks" were among the "Sooners" who raced to stake claims.<sup>5</sup> Several African American writers who experienced frontier life firsthand have set down those experiences in autobiographies or fictionalized accounts of their own stories. As does Thompson's autobiography, these accounts primarily tell the stories of African

American individuals or of single black families living as part of predominately white frontier communities. Nat Love's autobiography, *The Life and Adventures of Nat Love, Better Known in the Cattle Country as "Deadwood Dick"* (1907), recounts highlights of his career as a black cowboy in what he calls the "Wild and Woolly West." Oscar Micheaux (better known as the pioneering black filmmaker who began his career making all-black-cast silent movies) wrote several novels, including *The Conquest* (1913) and *The Homesteader* (1917), based on his own experiences as a farmer and homesteader in South Dakota. We also might note Montana-born Taylor Gordon, whose entertaining autobiography *Born to Be* (1929) begins in his hometown of White Sulphur Springs (where, he writes, "If God ever did spend any time here on earth, that must have been His hang-out, for every little thing that's natural and beautiful to live with is around White Sulphur") and follows his adventures as he travels around the country by train as the private porter for circus impresario John Ringling.<sup>6</sup>

As do the narratives of Micheaux and Gordon, *American Daughter* describes a sense of restless movement, with Thompson sometimes shuttling back and forth between her frontier home and urban black communities as her race-based and place-based senses of self repeatedly diverge, conflict, and intersect. Although Thompson shares with Micheaux and Gordon an understanding that descriptions of place can serve an allegorical purpose (as indicated by her use of the wilderness/metropolis opposition as a metaphor for double-consciousness), she balances that allegorical approach with naturalistic and poetic descriptions of a prairie landscape that she observes closely and comes to appreciate for its variety and beauty.

#### DESCRIBING THE PRAIRIE

Era Bell Thompson ends up in North Dakota when her father, concerned about his sons' futures, observes, "[W]e'd better take the boys

to Dakota. . . . They need to grow and develop, live where there's less prejudice and more opportunity" (21). The Dakota frontier represents for Tony Thompson an opportunity unavailable in the civilized East with its system of legal and social segregation. "Nothin' for colored boys to get in this town," Tony states, "but porter work, washin' spittoons" (21). Inspired by his half-brother John, who writes to him praising "the boundless prairies" as a "new land of plenty where a man's fortune was measured by the number of his sons, and a farm could be had even without money," Tony strikes out "for far-off North Dakota to find a new home in the wide open spaces, where there was freedom and equal opportunity for a man with three sons. Three sons and a daughter" (18, 22). As "a daughter," Thompson is barely an afterthought in her father's plans of freedom and equal opportunity—and is certainly inadequate as a measure of his success. For the first third of the story, Thompson almost seems an afterthought in her own narrative as she downplays her own actions in favor of reporting the successes and failures of her father and brothers Tom, Dick, and Harry. Her witness-participant persona, however, enables an objective and often ironic commentary on the men's wilderness-taming efforts.

The Thompsons eventually sign a tenant lease on the "old Hansmeyer place," a homestead that comes with a house, barn, land, and a pair of horses, let loose on the prairie. Those horses immediately capture her father's imagination: "Them's the wildest tame horses I ever see. But ain't no horse livin' I can't handle. No, sirree. Ain't no horse livin'" (39-40). As Tony is seduced by the sight of the wild horses, he is also taken in by Hansmeyer's sales pitch about the "hidden possibilities of the soil (hidden two feet under the snow)" (39). When the snow melts, the family discovers beneath the snow not possibilities but "rocks, millions of rocks pimpling the drab prairie: large blue-gray boulders . . . long, narrow slits of rocks surfacing the soil like huge cetacean monsters" (41). The horses prove as troublesome as the

rocky ground. After the spring thaw, the men (with much effort) succeed in luring the horses into the barn. While Tom follows them inside, the no longer boastful Tony takes "a safe position outside the barn window—club in hand" (42). From inside the barn "came a high shrill whinny, the thudding sound of bodies, splintering stalls. The old barn moved ominously" (43). Eventually, with the help of a neighbor (Gus, a Norwegian immigrant bachelor with a fondness for whiskey), Tom gets the horses hitched to a wagon. Leaping forward from the barn, "the horses made a new gate through the yard fence and tore down the muddy road on a dead gallop, as Gus sat waving his bottle and yelling in Norwegian" (43). Two hours later, Tom guides the exhausted horses home: "The buggy was a shambles, Gus was stone sober, but we had a team" (43). Tom tames the horses, but only temporarily, as Tony continues to have trouble with them. Although he drives the team into town one day without mishap, the horses return an hour later "on a dead run, heads up, heels flying, a picture of rhythmic beauty. Turning in the gate on two wheels, they stopped only when the buggy lodged in the barn door. Pop and one seat were missing" (44).

As her brothers take to the tasks of taming the horses, plowing the fields, and "dodging the rocks," the nine-year-old Thompson enviously watches "the shining shares slide along beneath the stubborn sod, turning over long rows of damp, blackish earth like unending dusky curls" (46-47). Excluded by age and gender from plowing, Thompson begins to develop a different relationship with the prairie than her father and brothers do. Once the initial shock of the North Dakota winter passes, Thompson indicates a growing sense of appreciation for the natural world around her:

As fall drew near, the intense heat subsided. There were quiet, silent days when the grainfields were hills of whispering gold, undulating ever so softly in the bated breeze. So warm, so tranquil was the spell that one



stretched out on the brown, dry earth, whose dead, tufted prairie grasses made the lying hard, but put even the breeze above you. The sun alone stood between you and the blue sky of God. (58)

If bleak winter landscape descriptions reflect Thompson's sense of "exile, differentiated by the color of my skin," she nonetheless establishes a sense of belonging to this world. She does not make the land into home by trying to transform it (as do her father and brothers) but rather by reshaping her vision of her self in relation to the world. She does not dominate the land so much as place herself within it, "stretched out on the brown, dry earth." According to Joanne Braxton, Thompson achieves a sense of "perceptual unity with nature."<sup>7</sup> In Thompson's landscapes, prairie, sun, sky, and individual each exist in close relation to the other.

We might compare Thompson's perspective on landscape to that of Oscar Micheaux, who similarly tells of an early-twentieth-century African American pioneer trying to establish a prairie farm. In his novel *The Homesteader*, Micheaux writes that his protagonist, Jean Baptiste, came to South Dakota "because he felt it was the place for young manhood," and because "here with the unbroken prairie all about him; with its virgin soil and undeveloped resources . . . here could a young man work out his own destiny." Writing in the social context of early-twentieth-century prejudice, Micheaux uses Baptiste's transformation of a wild place into a profitable enterprise to symbolize what African Americans in general can accomplish in a world of equal opportunity. His landscape descriptions are shaped by that purpose, so much so that he shows little interest in the prairie's natural beauty. Rather, he emphasizes storms, fires, droughts—natural obstacles to success that Baptiste overcomes through the quality of his character and his admirable work ethic. Whereas Thompson appreciates the prairie in and of itself, Jean Baptiste most appreciates a transformed: "[H]e gazed out over a

stretch of land which two years before, had been a mass of unbroken prairie, but was now a world of shocked grain." In Baptiste's eyes, "no crops are like the crop on new land," and the land itself "seemed to appreciate the change, and the countless shocks before him were evidence to the fact." Baptiste does not stretch "out on the brown, dry earth," but rather he "gaze[s] over" it, establishing himself in a position of visual dominance rather than perceptual unity.<sup>8</sup>

Thompson's descriptions often take the form of a catalogue of the flora and fauna of the prairie that emphasizes a naturalist's eye for detail and a poet's sensibility. "The tumbling tumbleweeds," writes Thompson, "heralded the coming of winter. Huge Russian thistles, ugly and brittle now, free of their moorings, rolled across the prairie like silent, gray ghosts, catching in fence corners, piling up in low places, herded and driven mercilessly by the cold wind that whistled down from the far North" (66). As does Micheaux, Thompson is attentive to planted fields as well as undisturbed prairie, but her descriptions emphasize beauty over bounty. If "a world of shocked grain" represents financial success for Micheaux, Thompson finds that there is "something clean and sweet about the harvest," discovers that there is "an art in shocking grain" (58-59). Even her descriptions of crop failure recognize the beauty in a natural process that begins with the transformation of a "stubbornly" green "twenty-acre strip of flax" into a "whole field burst into delicate blue flowers, miniature stars against the yellow mustard blooms" and ends when "the blue flowers disappeared as quickly as they had come, and tiny bulbs of seed began to form in their place, to brown and ripen too quickly in the searing wind" (50).

As Annette Kolodny suggests, male writers who describe the American landscape often use the figure of "virgin" terrain that "apparently invites sexual assertion and awaits impregnation."<sup>9</sup> Through references to the prairie's "virgin soil and undeveloped resources" and to the "virgin soil [that] had been

opened to the settler" (to name just two examples), Micheaux follows this pattern by implicitly sexualizing the landscape.<sup>10</sup> Other male writers indulge in a more explicitly sexual relationship through descriptions of physically merging with or penetrating the land. Although sensual, Thompson's landscape descriptions are not allegorical representations of the earth as a female body to be taken, opened, possessed, penetrated, or dominated. Although she may animate her landscapes (they "whisper" and "undulate"), she does not overtly sexualize them, nor does she penetrate or physically merge with the environment. Though "stretched out on the brown, dry earth," she observes that the "prairie grasses made the lying hard," a description that emphasizes both close proximity and distinct physical separation of the individual and the environment (58). Returning from delivering a load of grain, she observes, "[S]ometimes I sat silently on the high seat or stood down in the bottom of the deep wagon . . . watching gold-streaked heavens turn blue with approaching night" (101). Thompson's landscape descriptions pointedly include her presence as part of the depicted scene. Although she does not establish a dominating gaze that inscribes a hierarchical relationship between observer and observed, she nonetheless maintains a distinct sense of boundaries between self and other. By describing her position within the scene as the observer "on the high seat" or "in the bottom" of the wagon, she implies both perceptual unity with and physical separation from the scene under observation.

Although her landscapes do not connote the female body, she does connect the prairie to her mother. That connection is emotional rather than physical, for she increasingly turns to the prairie for the sort of comfort—especially in terms of salving the consciousness wounded by prejudice—and restored sense of wholeness that her mother provides earlier in the autobiography. During her first day at the Driscoll school, she is subjected to the intrusive curiosity of the other children: "One of Sue's friends put her arm around me and felt of

my hair; Tillie stared at the white palms of my hands, and I closed my fists tight until they hurt. For the first time I began to wonder about that and about the soles of my feet" (33). When she returns home, she discovers her mother waiting. She "clasped me in her arms, hugging me as though she had never expected to see me again, and I soon forgot about the soles of my feet and the palms of my hands" (33). Later in the narrative, she turns for such forgetfulness to the natural world, or she loses herself in the rhythm of farm chores: "With my dog and my pony I was happy beyond the realm of people, for I had found a friendship among animals that wavered not, that asked so little and gave so much of loyalty and trust, irrespective of color" (84). "The coming-home on a load of hay in the warm silence of twilight," Thompson writes, "had a sacredness about it that filled us with the inner happiness that comes of a day's work well done" (52). The prairie becomes a place of peace and healing that supplements or substitutes for her family.<sup>11</sup>

Repeated throughout her landscape descriptions are references to beauty, tranquility, silence, and peace, but also to solitude and loneliness. Alone with a horse and wagon, Thompson describes the experience of hauling grain to the elevator: "I loved the long, solitary ride through the golden autumn sunshine . . . when the days stood still and the warm silence was unbearable in its poignant beauty" (100). Although the prairie represents healing, her moments of experiencing a sense of wholeness are most often achieved at the cost of separation from the social world. "Of all the family, I alone was happy on our land, content to call it home," Thompson writes, but that happiness in solitude mirrors the sense of social isolation she often feels in her predominately white community (111). Thompson's landscape descriptions encode a seemingly contradictory sense of both isolation from and unity with her surroundings that points to the central question of the narrative: how does one establish a sense of natural wholeness and unity as part of a social world divided by race?



DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE  
WILDERNESS/METROPOLIS OPPOSITION

For W. E. B. Du Bois, the question of how to achieve a sense of whole self in an America divided by the color line is the central dilemma of African American experience.<sup>12</sup> Thompson's unique contribution both to the literature of the frontier and to African American literature is her clever joining of the central oppositions of each body of literature, using frontier literature's wilderness/metropolis opposition as a metaphor for double-consciousness. The metropolis for Thompson represents African American culture and identity, and the wilderness (prairie) represents assimilation into the predominately white world of the American mainstream. Although Thompson ultimately tries to overcome these oppositions, others in the book try to resolve their sense of double-consciousness by severing their connection to the black East. In response to her mother's curiosity about other black people in the area, Thompson's uncle John states, "What'd you want with colored folks, Mary? Didn't you come up here to get away from 'em? Me, I could do without 'em for the rest of my days" (27-8). In the mythology of the frontier, life on the frontier is always better than in "civilization," and for Thompson's uncle John, assimilation in the frontier community is preferable to an unassimilated life among black people in the metropolis.

Others indicate less certainty than John does. As Early observes, for Du Bois, "To be an assimilated American and to be an unassimilated Negro were both real and, more importantly, equally or near equally appealing choices," and many of the characters we meet in *American Daughter* address the difficulty of that choice.<sup>13</sup> Ed Smith, an African American man whom Tony Thompson rooms with while he is working in Bismarck, exemplifies this dilemma. In Bismarck, he operates a successful pawnshop, but he acknowledges his wife's loneliness: "[S]he hasn't got anybody to associate with but white folks. Oh, they're nice enough, treat us fine and all that, but they're

not colored, see" (80). The African American, writes Du Bois, "ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings."<sup>14</sup> With the birth of their son, the Smiths find themselves similarly divided. They "don't want to bring the kid up ignorant about his own people," but at the same time they "don't want him to learn how to run from white folks" (80). As Ed states, "I was bred and born in the South, lived there most of my life, but I don't want my son to be brought up there either" (80).

Thompson's brother Dick, who abandons the farming enterprise early in the story, makes a different choice and migrates eastward to the city as soon as he's old enough to leave the family. In a letter, he asks, "How . . . can you folks stay out there in that Godforsaken country away from civilization and our people?" (113) Dick also sends a copy of the *Chicago Defender*, "the first Negro newspaper I had ever seen" (113). While the newspaper represents part of Thompson's education in African American culture, it also reminds her of the problems blacks face back in "civilization"—through a story on lynching and a photograph of a hanging. "The lifeless body dangling from the tree," writes Thompson, "became a symbol of the South" and of "Dick's civilization," a place where "black and white Americans fought each other and died" (113). Through the stories of individual family members and neighbors, Thompson describes the different responses and psychological adjustments of these pioneers who have left behind black communities to become part of a strange white frontier world—a world that offers greater opportunity for landownership, less (but not a complete lack of) racism, a degree of safety from the antiblack violence erupting throughout much of early-twentieth-century America, and escape from the corrupt Jim Crow culture of segregation and second-class citizenship. That escape, however, comes at the cost of separation from African American culture and community. Forced to make a choice, which is preferable? Remaining isolated from "our people" in the relative safety of the frontier,



or risking the dangers of antiblack violence in the civilized metropolis?

Just before Christmas, the family experiences their first blizzard, and Thompson describes the storm closing in and "forming a blurry whiteness" (69). Even within the whiteness of the storm, the family recreates a sense of belonging to the black world left behind when several African American families get together to celebrate Christmas:

Now there were fifteen of us, four percent of the state's entire Negro population. Out there in the middle of nowhere, laughing and talking and thanking God for this new world of freedom and opportunity, there was a feeling of brotherhood, of race consciousness, and of family solidarity. For the last time in my life, I was part of a whole family, and my family was a large part of a little colored world, and for a while no one else existed. (74)

The physical distance between the urban black world and the predominately white frontier community exaggerates the dilemma of double-consciousness, but the Thompson family is able to find "a little colored world" within the surrounding blurry whiteness and maintain a feeling of "race consciousness" and a sense of solidarity with black friends and family that contributes to their ability to transform this new world into "home." Although many frontier narratives maintain an essential difference between civilization and wilderness, *American Daughter* undermines that distinction by recreating a sense of the urban black community on the Dakota frontier.

Transforming North Dakota from a strange white world into home involves not only adjusting to the new natural environment but also connecting with other families—white and black—in order to create an integrated community. At the Christmas celebration, "two white families stopped by to extend their greetings. The spell of color was broken, but not the spirit of Christmas, for the way Mack greeted them and their own warm response

erased any feeling we may have had of intrusion" (74). Thompson complicates her initial image of the "white world" by acknowledging that her frontier community is multiethnic if not multiracial. The establishment of an integrated community involves friendships established between the Thompsons and other neighbors—primarily European and Scandinavian immigrants. A German neighbor, seeing that the Thompsons are in desperate straits, buys them sacks of food: "Nein, nein! I no vant money. Ven you git it you pay me, if you vant. I got money, I your neighbor, I help you. Dot iss all" (55). Integration for Thompson does not mean assimilation—losing one's black identity by merging completely with the surrounding white world—but involves rather a mixing of cultural elements, as symbolized in one example by her brothers developing their own patois, which they dub "Negrowegian" (82). Although Driscoll, North Dakota, is no utopian space free from racial prejudice, Thompson consistently (if temporarily) locates here and elsewhere the possibility of integrated communities that represent her vision of what America should be.

Feelings of "at-home-ness" are fleeting, however, and the wholeness of the "little colored world" enjoyed at Christmas fragments with the untimely death of Thompson's mother the following February. The family begins to break apart as one by one her brothers abandon the farm, leaving only Thompson and her father, who walked around "in a halo of grief, whistling or humming the old hymns" (97). Braxton observes that Mary Thompson symbolizes Era Bell's "connection with the primary source of [her] black and female identity."<sup>15</sup> Her mother's death begins a process whereby Thompson becomes more and more alienated from the black world which she feels so much a part of at Christmas. Although the prairie landscape she turns to for comfort may substitute as a source of maternal and female identity, the land does not provide that same sense of connection to black identity. The loss of her mother—and the connection to black identity she symbolizes—initiates

a search both for self and for a lost home, a physical and psychological space representative of wholeness rather than two-ness. The prairie that Thompson loves, with its "white clouds of peace and clean, blue heavens," cannot overcome the pull she feels to learn more about the black world of the East (113).

After his wife's death, and after his sons leave, Tony abandons farming to move farther west to Mandan, North Dakota, where the mountain time zone and "the real West" begin (145). At this midpoint in her autobiography, Thompson's story becomes a narrative of education and of discovery of a voice—as symbolized by her developing career as a writer. As her father moves west, she travels in the opposite direction seeking the "land of my people," where she secures a summer job with the Smiths in St. Paul and begins to explore "the world of colored girls and boys . . . of colored stores and churches" (159). Her people, resentful that an outsider has taken one of the few available white-collar jobs for African Americans, do not accept her with open arms, and by summer's end, "I was glad to leave . . . glad to get away from grocery stores and restaurants and rows of colored houses and colored people's gates—gates where I was still a stranger—and colored boys and girls who did not want me" (164). Thompson's effort to resolve her sense of double-consciousness is reflected after her mother's death by the narrative's restless movements back and forth. "I wondered what it was I had sought to escape," Thompson writes, "running back and forth from prairie to city" (198). In each move, she finds herself located either in white or black worlds—or uneasily negotiating the space between the two. At the same time that she loves the silence of the prairie, she also loves the voice that she discovers in her journeys to the city. To be on the prairie is to be comforted and healed, but it is also to be silent and alone.

Rejected by the black community of St. Paul, she turns her attention to another strange white world—as one of the few African American students at the University of North Da-

kota. Thompson inherits the ability to survive in this and other environments from her father, who emerges as someone who flourishes when asked to bring together black and white social worlds. After taking over a furniture store in Mandan, he and Era Bell set up in a new house that is separated from their neighbors, the Harmons, by "a high fence" through which "four little boys fretted" and "tried to make friends through the cracks. Mrs. Harmon didn't approve of Negroes for neighbors" and spends her day "watching from behind her starched curtains" (137). Thompson writes:

Pop was irked by the constant watching, and he felt sorry for the little boys jailed in behind the fence, so gradually he began to break the lady down. Every morning he'd come outside by the kitchen window and bow politely to the starched curtains and say good morning to the kids. His whistling about the yard and garden drew them to the fence like a magnet. He talked to them as he worked, apparently unmindful of the woman's watching eyes. Little by little the curtains began to part, slowly Mrs. Harmon began to nod, then smile. It wasn't long before she came out on her back porch to sit and listen to what Pop said to her boys, before the little boys were slipping over the fence and into our yard. (138)

Not all walls that separate black and white are so easily breached, and we have plenty of examples in the book of people whose prejudice is able to withstand even the considerable Thompson charm. Nonetheless, Thompson's father provides her with strategies for surviving in the white world that she must negotiate to earn her college degree. His talent for creating friendships across ethnic and racial boundaries is one that Thompson will develop as well.

Following her mother's death, Thompson establishes a series of relationships with girls and young women of different ethnic groups, and it is from these friendships that she begins to reestablish a sense of female identity and

community. After her father abandons the farm, the two live in several North Dakota towns where Thompson finds a wider sampling of ethnicities than in the farming community of Driscoll. Her new community includes Russian German friends who live in neighborhoods where "English was seldom spoken," as well as her Sioux friend Priscilla Running Horse whose non-English-speaking mother, Thompson observes, was likewise "Old Country," except that "it wasn't Old Country: it was this country" (145-47). In Bismarck, she befriends the Jewish Sarah Cohn, and the two "became inseparable" (127). Together, they wander "into enemy territory, neighborhoods where the kids called us names; but if they called me a coon, they called her a kike, and when I was with her there was none of the embarrassment I felt when I was with my other friends" (128). As a student at the University of North Dakota, she takes up residence with the adventurous Opal Block in the Jewish section of Grand Rapids, where she adds Yiddish to her "strange vocabulary" of Norwegian, German, and English, and where she develops "a taste for lokshen and kosher fleish" (174). Through female friendships, Thompson creates a multiethnic social community whose members transgress the official and physical boundaries that segregate groups of people within distinct areas of space—the German neighborhood, the Jewish section, the Indian school.

She begins to experience through these social relations a sense of unity and comfort similar to that found earlier in her solitary sojourns on the prairie, but her task remains to find a way to bring together her experiences of the social and natural worlds—and to connect both to an African American community that seems increasingly distant. Although Thompson enjoys a degree of social mobility as an individual, that mobility does not exist for the majority of African Americans who remain confined by the physical patterns of segregation. Her task is made more difficult with the death of her father, which also symbolizes the severing of the final familial con-

nection to the western landscape: "Between two deaths I stood at prairie eventide; the last symbol of family lay lifeless at my feet. Gone, too, were the bonds and obligations, and in their stead a bereftness, a desolate freedom. My life was my own choosing, and there could be no more coming home" (201). After her father's death, her explorations take her farther east, and the narrative emphasis turns to a search for a place in the world of the metropolis.

Thompson eventually finds a place in the home of a white family, the Rileys, who help sponsor her attendance at Morningside College in Iowa. Although she is happy and comfortable within both the Riley family and the Morningside College community, after graduation Thompson moves to Chicago "seeking work and a home among my people" (249). Although her "new home was ideal," her African American landlord and landlady "didn't like white people," and when she brings her white friend Silver to visit, "we were met with a cold, hostile silence" (267). Individual efforts to create an integrated society of close friends are made difficult by the larger divisions of the social world, and her Chicago experience—rather than resolving her sense of double-consciousness—leaves her "feeling that I was fighting the world alone, standing in a broad chasm between the two races, belonging to neither one" (268). In segregated Chicago, she also finds herself under tighter economic and social restrictions than she had experienced while under the protective care of white friends in North Dakota and Iowa. When the Rileys come to visit, "for a while I was back in the boundless white world, where all gates were open, all the fences down. . . . It was a temptation to go home with the Rileys, but I chose to stay in my new black world, feeling that somewhere I would find a happy side, that between the white and the black there must be a common ground" (255).

That wished-for common ground is sometimes found. When visited by her white friend Gwyn, Thompson takes her to a "shady knoll in Washington Park, where we could sit on



the cool grass and talk, where, under the pure blue sky and the whispering trees, no shadow of race would come between us" (268). Natural space operates as both the figurative opposite of the urban metropolis and as a possible point of mediation between the black and white social worlds that split Thompson's allegiance. Thompson occasionally finds in such natural spaces as the park momentary integrated "homes" that exist in contrast to the segregated social spaces we see in the book. As Braxton observes, "Chicago's 'pure blue sky' brings back Era Bell's childhood sense of wholeness symbolized by her perceptual unity with nature and the blue skies of her North Dakota girlhood."<sup>16</sup> In contrast to those earlier moments of unity with nature, Thompson shares this moment with another. If Thompson figures double-consciousness through her twin desires to find a sense of unity in both the natural world of the prairie and the social world of the metropolis, the park, which exists within urban Chicago, represents the interrelationship of both those worlds. The "whispering trees" recall the whispering grain fields of the prairie. That the same "pure blue sky" exists above both Chicago and North Dakota posits the two not as opposing terms but rather as part of the same continuum of experience. Thompson realizes that she must rethink the separation of natural space from social space, must overturn the frontier narrative's metropolis/wilderness opposition in order to be able to create for herself places of healing, comfort, and integration—in order to create "home" in other environments.

In the final chapter, Thompson narrates a trip by bus across America. Through her travels, she claims a place in all parts of America. Thompson herself becomes a figure who links different regions (North, South, East, West) and seemingly opposed social worlds. Thompson resists seeing the city and the frontier as essential markers of difference, as inferior and superior places; neither does she lift one social world, black or white, over the other—for she calls both regions and both communities home. Still, she realizes that she alone cannot close

the social gap, that the resolution to two-ness ultimately involves social forces larger than the self. She concludes with the comment, "The chasm is growing narrower. When it closes, my feet will rest on a united America" (296). Although *American Daughter* registers a pattern of location and dislocation, of finding home, of being in exile, Thompson never abandons her effort to resolve double-consciousness by establishing, even if tenuously, a sense of home and of belonging in both the city and the prairie, in both the black and the white worlds.

#### NOTES

1. Era Bell Thompson, *American Daughter* (1946; St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 26-27, 83-84. Subsequent references to this work will be given parenthetically in the text.

2. Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization* (1985; New York: HarperPerennial, 1994).

3. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; New York: Penguin, 1989), 5.

4. Gerald Early, introduction to *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, ed. Gerald Early (New York: Penguin, 1993), xx.

5. Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 158; Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (1976; New York: Norton, 1986); William Loren Katz, *The Black West* (1987; New York: Touchstone, 1996), 248.

6. Nat Love, *The Life and Adventures of Nat Love* (1907; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Oscar Micheaux, *The Conquest* (1913; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Oscar Micheaux, *The Homesteader* (1917; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Taylor Gordon, *Born to Be* (1929; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 4.

7. Joanne M. Braxton, *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition within a Tradition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 162.

8. Micheaux, *The Homesteader*, 24, 131.

9. Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 67.

10. Micheaux, *The Homesteader*, 24, 109.

11. Kevin L. Cole and Leah Weins usefully place *American Daughter* in the context of the genre of the spiritual autobiography, and they observe that while criticism on the book has recognized the thematic centrality of displacement, overlooked has been "the problem of religious displacement, perhaps the most complex aspect of Thompson's coming-of-age autobiography" (226). Cole and Weins point out that Thompson's use of religious language in her landscape descriptions can be interpreted as a "rhetorical strategy" that figures "the absence of a black religious community" in North Dakota (223). Viewed from the perspective established by Cole and Weins, Thompson's application of religious language ("sacredness") to her descriptions of experiences in nature might suggest that the prairie supplements or substitutes for not only her family but also that absent black religious

community. Kevin L. Cole and Leah Weins, "Religion, Idealism, and African American Autobiography in the Northern Plains: Era Bell Thompson's *American Daughter*," *Great Plains Quarterly* 23 (Fall 2003): 219-29.

12. "Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century," writes Du Bois, who continues, "This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth-Century is the problem of the color-line." Du Bois, *Souls*, 1.

13. Early, *Lure and Loathing*, 20.

14. Du Bois, *Souls*, 5.

15. Braxton, *Black Women Writing Autobiography*, 146.

16. *Ibid.*, 174.

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# CANADA'S CAMPAIGN FOR IMMIGRANTS AND THE IMAGES IN CANADA WEST MAGAZINE

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One of the major challenges that Canadian government officials felt they faced at the end of the nineteenth century was the development of the prairie West. By this time there were large urban centers in eastern Canada, but many Canadians worried that they had not truly ensured the future existence of their country. They hoped that filling the middle, the province of Manitoba and the region that would become the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, with prosperous, white, family farmers would support the industrialized cities

of the East. To do this the government engaged in a systematic program to encourage immigration of farmers and agricultural laborers from the United States and Britain. This involved many forms of promotion, including a magazine entitled *Canada West*. From this publication we can see that the ideal society envisioned by Canadian officials was a modern, highly developed society, based on family farms. This work shall demonstrate through a detailed analysis of the magazine's covers over several years the ways in which Canada depicted the ideal life farmers could hope to have on the prairies.

KEY WORDS: advertising, Canada, ethnicity, farming, immigration

## CANADA WEST AND THE PROMOTION OF CANADA

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The subject of this work, the publication *Canada West*, was one of the most important pieces of promotional material that the Canadian Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior produced. When it was introduced, the immigration agents throughout Britain and the United States found it the most useful publication in their collection for promoting the West.<sup>1</sup> The booklet itself was a

magazine-sized text featuring sections on the general history of Canada, the development of the West, and each of the prairie provinces and territories. It was a catchall document, as opposed to some of the other brochures available to the agents, which promoted only one region. It was also much more sophisticated in appearance than the earlier works. Designed by Rand McNally under the direction of the Immigration Branch, *Canada West* was filled with black and white pictures of prairie life and colorful maps of Canada and its regions. The magazine evolved over time, reflecting the changing reality of prairie farm life but also incorporating new advertising techniques.

This paper focuses on the covers of *Canada West* rather than the text contained within. Many of the themes addressed in the covers are more explicitly identified in the written promotion, and where appropriate the text will be used to illustrate and elaborate on the topics discussed. The covers will be the focus, though, because they succinctly demonstrate that the Canadian government had an agenda of populating the prairies with prosperous white families.

#### IMAGES AS SOURCES

Traditionally historians have undervalued images, preferring texts as their primary sources, and this work hopes to address some of those omissions of the past. It is possible to analyze an image and find historical significance in it, without making the image secondary to a related text. As Jean Colson has said, it is a matter of looking at the images systematically, identifying individual themes in the same way that historians have traditionally looked at texts.<sup>2</sup> These covers are of interest because they were the viewers' first contact with the government's message; thus, the creators took special care with them. This is true in the sense that each year's edition of the magazine text changed relatively little, sometimes not at all. Despite the continuity in the message, each edition had a different focus. Obviously the Immigration Branch of-

ficials who **oversaw** the production of *Canada West* put more priority on updating the visual message of the cover than they did the written one contained **inside**.

#### HISTORY OF ADVERTISEMENT AND PROMOTION

For the purpose of this work, the word *advertising* will be used interchangeably with the term *promotion*. This is appropriate because the Canadian government was engaged in a systematic campaign to promote the West, and this campaign used many of the same techniques that product manufacturers of the time would have used to sell their products. Part of the Canadian plan was to place advertisements in many of the newspapers of the United States and Britain, up to 7,000 publications in 1906.<sup>3</sup> The government used an advertising agency, Lord and Thomas of Chicago, to create and place the newspaper advertisements, which were just part of a sophisticated, modern campaign.<sup>4</sup> As John Oldland noted, "[W. J.] White [Press and Advertising Agent for the Immigration Branch] was giving Canada a positive identity at the same time as Kodak ('you press the button; we do the rest') was branding cameras and National Biscuits was first packaging cookies with the Uneeda brand ('lest you forget, we say it yet, Uneeda Biscuit')."<sup>5</sup>

The Canadian immigration campaign was a good example of modern advertising, fitting into many of the categories established by previous advertising historians. One such author was Richard Tedlow, who broke the history of American advertising down into three stages. The Canadian ads fit into his second period, that is, those appearing after 1880. He said that

toward the end of the nineteenth century, the completion of the railroad and telegraph network set the stage for the second phase of American marketing. This was the era of the national mass market, in which a small number of firms realized scale economies to an unprecedented degree by ex-

panding their distribution from coast to coast and border to border.<sup>6</sup>

The Canadian advertisements not only occurred in this period, but they fit Tedlow's description in other ways. There is no evidence that they were regional; they do not mention the places where the advertisements were placed. They also fit the description of the second phase in that Canada was marketed as the perfect place for all farmers, not just one particular group, such as farm owners. Although certain advertisements singled out one group as their target, none of them suggested that the group was the only appropriate one for the prairies.<sup>7</sup>

Tedlow was only one of the advertising historians whose methodology is appropriate for analyzing the Canadian advertisements. Roland Marchand in his book *Advertising the American Dream* points out the importance of advertising as a historical source. He quoted a 1926 publication from the advertising firm N. W. Ayer and Son that said, "[D]ay by day a picture of our time is recorded completely and vividly in the advertising in American newspapers and magazines."<sup>8</sup> Marchand contended that advertisements do not just influence a society, but they also reflect certain aspects of that society. As Marchand argued, "advertising leaders recognized the necessity of associating their selling messages with the values and attitudes already held by their audience."<sup>9</sup> In the case of the advertisements used to recruit farmers to the Canadian West, the society they reflected was the ideal one envisioned by the Canadian government and the hope was that this would appeal to potential immigrants in the United States. The message that the Canadian prairies were the perfect place for American farmers was one that the government would repeat time and time again.

A final source for this methodology is Jackson Lears's book *Fables of Abundance*. Especially in the later advertisements, the Canadian government tried to use scientific claims, backed by the testimony of experts. Lears referred to this new form of advertising as tech-

nocratic and argued "this mode of expression was rooted in the assumption that human technical prowess could transform the course of life into a predictable pursuit of personal well-being."<sup>10</sup> The Canadian advertisements portray settlement as the natural extension of human achievements, accomplished not just through the hard work of pioneers but also through technological advancements in agriculture. In this respect the Canadian advertisements represent an important shift in advertising methods. The earliest ads use the older techniques of hyperbole and exaggerated claims, but the later ones show signs of the shift to technocratic advertising.

Finally, Lears said "the late-nineteenth-century ideal of *gemeinschaft*—the self-sufficient, organic community—achieved its embodiment in commercial imagery long before it was codified in sociological texts."<sup>11</sup> There may be no better representation of community in advertising than the Canadian advertisements. In part this was a response to the sparse settlement of the prairies; in order to attract settlers they had to downplay the isolation of prairie life. That was not the only purpose of community in these advertisements. It was a reflection of the type of settlers the Canadian government desired. According to historian Cecilia Danysk, "the agricultural community of the prairie West had been designed and was defined, both economically and socially as family-oriented, based on small-scale units of production—family farms."<sup>12</sup> The Canadian government had more than an economic agenda in mind with the settlement of the prairies. A major goal was to populate the region with hard-working, white, Protestant farm families who would uplift the moral character of the prairies and ensure that the West would remain "Canadian." This desire was expressed through their advertisements.

#### CANADA'S GOALS FOR THE PRAIRIES

From the beginning Canadian politicians had an eye toward developing the prairies, in part because of the agricultural potential of



the region. Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister, believed that the best way to encourage industrial development in the East was to settle the prairies with farmers who could provide a stable source of food for Canada's growing population as well as an additional source of exports in the form of grains, which were in great demand in Europe. Agricultural settlement, along with high tariffs and several other aspects of domestic and foreign policy, formed what was known as the National Policy. Although there were farms in the older provinces, these were smaller operations that could not produce grains in the desired quantities, and farmers in some regions concentrated more on producing specialty items, such as dairy products and fruits, which would bring them greater returns but did little to further the National Policy.

This may have been the most often stated reason for Canada's emphasis on westward expansion in the period, but it was not the only one. Cecilia Danysk states:

[W]estward expansion provided tangible political benefits as well. Capitalist support for a government providing such a lucrative market was the most obvious political reward. Industrial workers, promised more jobs and security through expanded markets, were enthusiastic in their support. Ontario farmers regarded the West as a patrimony for their sons unable to take up farms in an overcrowded province. Beyond a simple collection of votes, the acquisition of the prairies would ensure Canadian sovereignty in the northern part of the continent, protecting it from America's grasp.<sup>13</sup>

The year 1896 brought political change to Canada. It was in this year that the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Wilfrid Laurier, brought the Conservative Party's tenure to an end. The Liberals agreed to the essence of the National Policy, but they changed many aspects of how the government was run. As western development was concerned, one of the

most important changes was that the Liberals reorganized the way the government approached immigration. The previous administrations had taken a fairly haphazard approach to immigration. They put immigration under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, which produced only a limited amount of promotional material and did little else to advance immigration. In the second half of the nineteenth century the immigrants coming to Canada were not of the class or ethnicity that the political establishment desired. Most politicians believed that there were enough people in the East to serve as the industrial workforce. They wanted to encourage the immigration of farmers who would establish a white presence in the prairies. Not only did they want the grains that these farmers could produce, but they also wanted to form provinces from the regions.<sup>14</sup>

As in the United States, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was a period of tremendous immigration, but the Canadian government was not impressed with the way that immigration had transformed American society. As Irving Abella and Harold Troper noted in their work *None Is Too Many*,

By the early 1920s Canada, once terminus of the Underground Railway, had effectively barricaded itself against "foreigners." If Canada, unlike the United States, never legislated quotas against particular groups, Canada's government still enforced a restrictive immigration policy with unabashed ethnic and racial priorities. With public support, it knew what ethnic and racial groups it wanted and how to keep out those it did not.<sup>15</sup>

Although Abella and Troper in this instance were referring to the early 1930s, their observations hold true for the earlier period as well. Many Canadians felt that unchecked immigration was ruining American society; in particular they felt that immigrants were prone

to many vices and that they would contribute little to the betterment of Anglo-North American society.

#### ETHNICITY AND CANADA'S IMMIGRATION CAMPAIGN

Most Canadians had a ethnic hierarchy of immigrants. As Abella and Troper said, "British and American immigrants, especially agricultural immigrants, were always welcome, encouraged to come, recruited, made great promises, their journey often subsidised."<sup>16</sup> The highest rung on this ladder was up for debate. Some believed that the best ethnic group for Canada was the British. People who supported this position felt that the most important aspect of Canadian society was its imperial character and that the only way to maintain this was to import people who were already familiar with British institutions. The other school of thought was that Americans were preferable. The people who espoused this view assumed that Americans would have better farming skills, especially when it came to dry farming. Also, native-born residents of the prairies held negative stereotypes of British immigrants. As Cecilia Danysk noted of immigrant Wilfred Rowell, "as an Englishman looking for farm work, he encountered skepticism from prairie farmers who believed that Englishmen were 'frightfully lazy and don't even earn their keep.'"<sup>17</sup> People who preferred American immigrants also assumed that these newcomers would be Anglo-Americans, or at least northern Europeans, such as Germans and Scandinavians.

Northern Europeans were a distinctly less desirable ethnic group, but still acceptable. In their book Abella and Troper state that "when, out of economic necessity, Canada required immigrants from countries other than Britain and the United States, it gave preference to northern and central Europeans."<sup>18</sup> In fact, many of the Scandinavians and Germans who came to Canada in this period had either transmigrated through the United States or were the American-born children of immigrants.

Canada was aware of this and had agents to specifically recruit these groups in the United States, such as the special agent in St. Paul, Minnesota. Most Canadians felt that, while these immigrants were unfamiliar with British institutions, they were, for the most part, racially compatible with Anglo-Canadians. The exceptions to this rule were religious minorities. Groups such as Hutterites and Mennonites often came under the suspicion of native-born Canadians, mostly because of their desire to live in autonomous, insular communities. They were most certainly a second choice, but they were vastly preferred over the next group on the ladder, eastern Europeans.

Abella and Troper demonstrated that "only in periods of great economic prosperity did it [Canada] reach well down its ladder of ethnic preference to admit southern and eastern Europeans."<sup>19</sup> This group caused great controversy in Canada, even among Liberal Party leaders. Clifford Sifton, Laurier's first minister of the interior and the official in charge of the Immigration Branch, believed that British and American immigrants were preferable, but that there were advantages to Slavic immigrants as well. Sifton is famous today for his comment in defense of the many Ruthenian immigrants coming to Canada at the time: "I think a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality."<sup>20</sup> He felt that they had vast experience as farmers and also that their poverty would prevent them from expecting too much from the prairies. Many British and even American immigrants were shocked by the conditions that they encountered on the prairies and gave up their homesteads after just a few seasons farming them. Sifton hoped that their extreme poverty would make Slavic immigrants more amenable to the harsh conditions in the prairies.

Not all politicians shared this view. Frank Oliver, Clifford Sifton's immediate successor as minister of the interior, espoused the view

that Slavic immigration would be detrimental to Canada. He believed that Slavs were morally inferior to Anglo-Saxons and that their presence in Canada would corrupt the native-born population. His biggest concern was that he saw Slavs as unable to assimilate to British culture.<sup>21</sup> Overall, the Canadian government was moderately tolerant of immigrants from central and eastern Europe, but there were limits. As the 1911 edition of *Canada West* put it, "[N]ationality is no bar to progress . . . but a natural preference is shown to those who speak English and appreciate well-modeled institutions" (1). Though Sifton and Oliver represented opposite perspectives when it came to Slavic immigration, they agreed about the undesirability of other ethnic groups, particularly southern Europeans.

One of the groups most eager to come to Canada was southern Europeans, but native-born Canadians universally disregarded them. Along with Greeks, Italians formed one of the largest groups of immigrants coming to Canada at the turn of the century, but politicians did not appreciate their presence. Most of the political establishment viewed Italians and Greeks as a drain on Canada's resources, a moral detriment to society, and most significantly, not likely to become farmers. Since most of these immigrants were drawn to metropolitan areas, such as Montreal, they did not further the government's goal of populating the prairies.<sup>22</sup> Despite the lack of enthusiasm for southern Europeans, there were ethnic groups who fared even worse in Canada.

Perhaps the most despised groups to come to Canada at the turn of the century were Jews, Asians, and African Americans. Of these groups, Abella and Troper noted, "as Canada proceeded through the first half of the twentieth century, those groups that did not fit the national vision—especially Jews, Asians and blacks—were ever more often relegated by Canadian officials to the bottom of the list of those preferred."<sup>23</sup> The opposition to Jews took form of typical anti-Semitism. Native-born Canadians held racial stereotypes about Jews that prevented them from seeing Jews as good

immigrants. Particularly, Anglo-Canadians saw Jews as exclusively urbanites and therefore not useful in their plan to populate the prairies with farmers. Certainly this was not true; many of the Jews coming from the Pale of the Russian Empire were rural people with experience in agriculture, but reality could not break down the strongly held stereotypes of Canadian officials. Other than a few settlements established by Jewish relief agencies, there was little Jewish immigration to the prairies.<sup>24</sup>

Asians met with even greater resistance than did Jews in this period. To some extent this was because they were a visible presence, especially in western Canada. In his book *White Canada Forever*, W. Peter Ward countered earlier arguments that anti-Asian sentiments were based in economic concerns and found rather that the prejudice Asians in Canada faced was a "problem in the social psychology of race relations."<sup>25</sup> For the most part, Canadians opposed all Asian immigration, including Indian, Chinese, and Japanese, although pressure from British imperial officials to not damage their relationship with the empire of Japan prevented Canadians from taking dramatic action against Japanese immigrants. Indian and Chinese immigrants were eventually barred from entry altogether. The reasons that native-born Canadians gave for objecting to Asian immigrants were based completely in stereotypes and a lack of understanding of the immigrants' position. Among the most common complaints made against Asian immigrants was that they worked for wages that were too low and undercut native-born laborers. They were also accused of being amoral and having a corrupting influence, especially on white women. Finally, they were reviled for not bringing their families with them when they immigrated. Anglo-Canadians perceived this as a lack of commitment to Canada. There was little discussion of Asian immigrants' potential to become farmers, although many of them, particularly Japanese immigrants, did engage in this profession. Often, in reality, the immigrant groups that were deemed undesirable by native-born Canadians had exactly



the qualities most desirable **for prairie** life, and this was certainly the case **with African Americans**.

African Americans had **many** of the characteristics that Canadian **officials** most wanted from immigrants. One **particular** group, the former slaves of the Creek **tribe in** Oklahoma, expressed an interest in **immigration** and would have furthered the goals of **the government**. These were experienced farmers who knew more about the prairies than did the average immigrant from the British Isles. Additionally, their push factors were strong; they were experiencing tremendous prejudice in Oklahoma and hoped that Canada would provide a more tolerant home. Soon after their initial contacts with the Canadian government, these hopes were dashed.<sup>26</sup> Even otherwise open-minded politicians, such as Clifford Sifton, failed to support African American immigration, and eventually they were barred completely.<sup>27</sup>

This ethnic hierarchy was important to the way Canada recruited immigrants. Although the Immigration Branch produced some promotional materials for immigrants from the European continent, the vast majority of its efforts were directed at the United States and Britain. This work will address a series of documents produced by the Canadian government for distribution primarily in the United States as well as in Britain. Eventually many of these documents were translated **into** a great number of languages, but **this was** something of an afterthought.<sup>28</sup> For **example**, the Immigration Branch translated its **1900** edition of *Canada West* into French **for** distribution to Franco-Americans in New **England** as well as in France and Belgium, but **their** literal translations of the English text **led** to such odd and unconvincing **promotion** as the following:

Ce qu'**en** pensent les Anglais: Causant avec un jeune **anglais** qui revient au Canada après un **voyage** fait pour revoir la mère-patrie, celui-ci disait en parlant du climat: 'C'est après **avoir** passé quelque temps en Angleterre que l'on apprécie le climat du Canada Ouest.'<sup>29</sup>

It is apparent that these translations were of secondary concern to the Immigration Branch officials and that they did not put a great deal of effort into the non-English editions of these works. On the other hand, there was a fair amount of concern that surrounded the production of the English-language versions of these works.

#### DESIRABLE IMMIGRANTS

Just as Canadian officials had strongly held notions as to whom they did not want to recruit, they also had ideas as to which immigrants would be most beneficial for the region. As discussed previously, this group was largely families who would live on their farms. One group that the Canadian government felt sure it could encourage to immigrate was tenant farmers. As Cecilia Danysk noted in her book *Hired Hands*, tenants were desirable because they were in a precarious economic position. They teetered between the status of farm owners, who were the highest class of farmers, and farm laborers at the bottom. Although you could make a good living as a tenant, the future was not secure, and therefore they were a group receptive to the Canadian immigration campaign.<sup>30</sup> In large part they were open to the Canadian message because land was actually becoming a scarcer commodity in the United States. Beginning around 1893, with Frederick Jackson Turner's observation of the end of the frontier, American farmers began to panic that there would be no land left for them on which to expand, and certainly none for their sons. This made farmers, especially tenants, even more open to Canada.<sup>31</sup>

Immigration Branch officials had an additional reason for recruiting not only tenants but also farm laborers. Farm laborers had lower expectations for life on the prairies. Men who had been owners or even tenants in their home countries would expect to achieve that same standard of living in a relatively short time. Hired hands were more desperate just to get land of their own, and the government hoped that they would not expect much beyond that.

Additionally, the farmers who were already in the region needed seasonal help with their farms, and Canada hoped to provide this assistance in the form of young farm laborers who would work for a few seasons before starting farms of their own. For this reason, the government followed the lead of the railways and recruited men who had "no money but muscle and pluck."<sup>32</sup>

#### SOURCES USED

For the most part, the covers analyzed in this work came from issues of *Canada West* housed at the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library at the University of Alberta, and the conclusion drawn from them are backed up by evidence from the National Archives of Canada. These are the volumes concerning immigration and they contain most of the official documents produced and received by the Immigration Branch for the period concerned. This paper discusses *Canada West* issues from the end of this period in Canada's immigration policy, in most part because they are the most well-developed examples of the themes discussed. The earlier covers focus less specifically on women, children, and families than do those from this later period. These covers are the clearest examples of the topics discussed in this work, although families were certainly important to immigration officials earlier in the campaign.

Finally, before moving into a detailed discussion of the covers, it is important to specify what themes will be illustrated in this work. The first topic is Canada's emphasis on the importance of women to farms. Much of Canada's promotion dealt with the role of women in prairie society, although this material was not always addressed to women. In a related vein, the immigration officials who created these documents often emphasized the material development of prairie communities as a way of reassuring men and women alike that their new homes would be comfortable and modern. Women were made aware of the

social and cultural institutions they could expect to find in their new homes. Men, on the other hand, were informed of the types of agriculture they would practice on the prairies; both mixed and grain farming were emphasized in different covers. On the covers distributed in Britain, the immigration officials emphasized that Canada was a part of the empire and that immigrants could hope to find many British institutions recreated in Canada. Finally, these officials acknowledged that they could not hope to create generations of family farms in the West without children, and they were represented in the cover images as well.

Canada's immigration campaign began in earnest in 1898 and continued into the 1930s. There was a brief lessening, but not a complete cessation, during the First World War; otherwise it was a continuous, although evolving, effort. The major differences between the propaganda produced early in this period and that produced later are in the themes addressed. Additionally, developments in printing allowed for the production and distribution of detailed images. It is in this later period that the Canadian government came to produce large numbers of colorful, image-filled publications such as *Canada West*. The covers discussed here were produced between the years of 1921 and 1930, when these documents were not only visually stunning, but also began to include new themes. The earlier magazines are aimed at men who would be establishing homesteads in remote areas. As time went by, Canadian immigration material focused more on the amenities to be found in the West, such as schools, churches, telephone networks, and other signs of white settlement. One major concern that became apparent as immigrants came to Canada was that the number of men in the prairies vastly outnumbered women. This threatened the government's vision for a society made of farm families, and in order to correct this imbalance Canada issued advertisements that were aimed directly at women. The cover of *Canada West* from 1921 is a good example of these new forms of promotion.



## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CAMPAIGN

Earlier covers of *Canada West* depicted men working in fields or with livestock. Although their texts mentioned families, women and children did not appear in the cover imagery. This changed with the 1921 issue. The predominant figure on this cover was the woman in the foreground. Although there are three men working in the background, they are much less significant than the woman figure. She represents the postwar vision for prairie development, the face that the Canadian government wanted to put on the prairies. There were two intended audiences for this image. Men were meant to draw from it the idea that they could be more prosperous farmers in Canada because they could concentrate on the fieldwork while women, whether a housekeeper or a wife, would take care of domestic issues. As Frank Oliver said, "Canada is establishing a landed aristocracy" in the Canadian West, and in order to do so men needed someone to care for their household (CW 1911, 37).

For women, this image was meant to have a similar but subtly different message. They were supposed to place themselves in the position of this woman, who demonstrated that there was a place for women in this society. The Canadian advertisements concentrated heavily on addressing issues of interest to women, and in many cases the government produced documents that were explicitly directed at potential women immigrants. Whether as wives or domestic worker, women were essential to the proper functioning of a farm. Recognizing the important contributions women made to farms, the Canadian government recruited women to the region, often advertising explicitly for domestic servants. They encouraged women, both in the more general brochures and in documents created solely for distribution to women, by explaining the advantages of domestic work in Canada. According to these documents, Canadians were kinder employers than their European counterparts, emphasizing class less and providing better working conditions. The government

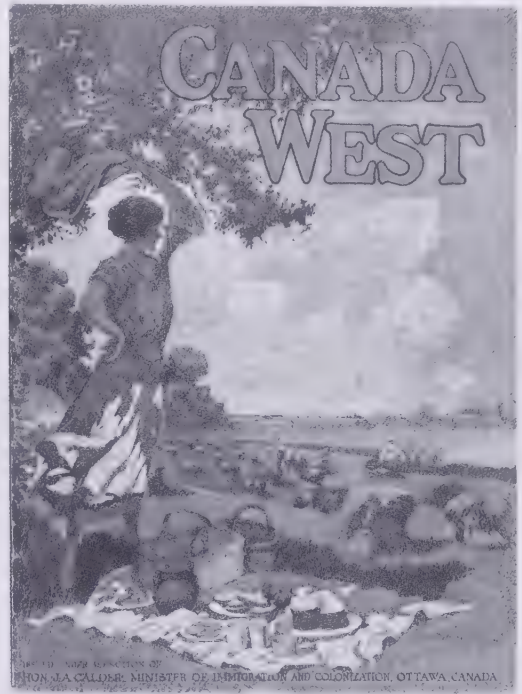


FIG. 1. *The cover of Canada West in 1921.* Photograph courtesy of the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta.

claimed that even untrained domestics could make high wages in Canada, although they did acknowledge that wages were higher in the cities than in rural communities.

In addition to specifying the types of women that they wanted to immigrate, the Canadian officials were clear about whom they did not want as well. In many of the documents they produced to recruit women, the authors included a section with a title like "classes for which demand is small."<sup>33</sup> Listed were professions such as "telephone clerks, typists, stenographers, and telegraph clerks."<sup>34</sup> Just as with men, Canada only wanted certain classes of women—those who could further the goals of the government for western development.

Finally, these promotional works emphasized the gender imbalance in the Canadian West. Many of these documents encouraged young, unskilled women to immigrate on the hope that they could marry quickly. The other point of view was that women who came to



Canada as domestic servants should work for as long as possible before marriage. Explaining this argument, one government publication stated that

girls have a better chance of having homes of their own in Canada than they have in England, but she must remember that in many cases where a farmer on a homestead wants a wife it means that she is to have all the drudgery and worry of a farm house in embryo and get no wages for her efforts. The longer a girl works in Canada at a good wage the more particular she becomes in the selection of a life partner.<sup>35</sup>

The author of this pamphlet went on to say that "there are Jacks for every Jill in Canada, but every Jack is not possessed of sufficient money to keep a wife."<sup>36</sup>

The woman on the 1921 cover did not seem to be suffering on the prairies. The whole scene has a pleasant sense to it. She dresses fashionably, lives in a new house, and has access, at least through catalogs, to commercial goods. Immigration Branch officials were aware of the growing importance of consumerism, and they frequently referred to the availability of goods for purchase in the West. They acknowledged that the farmer "likes to have his house well furnished and his boys and girls well dressed" (CW British ed. 1911, 33). Certainly this appeal to the consumer side of life was not lost on women either. In this 1921 edition the authors said that

the guiding hand of woman and her refining influence is seen in all sections of the country. The clap-board shack or mud hut have given place to the comfortable home with its wide open fireplace, its walls adorned with beautiful pictures; with flower gardens and vegetable plots which bear testimony to the presence of women. (9)

These were major points that the Canadian advertisers made in their literature aimed at women. As they said in the 1911 British edi-

tion, "the settler of today has no longer the pioneer's fear of untoward conditions" (33). Overall, agriculture was not the primary focus anymore; it was instead a means to obtaining a better life, the real goal of immigration to Canada. The picnic lunch that dominates in the foreground is a symbol of the prosperous, leisurely life that the Canadian government promised to immigrants. Picnics were a common theme in the Canadian immigration literature because they were an extreme demonstration of the leisure that officials wanted farmers to count on. As the authors said in the 1923 British edition of *Canada West*, "throughout the country districts there are the parties, the picnics, and the gatherings of people, just as in the 'old home back east'" (1). In order to create this scene a farmer would have to have several things: a wife or housekeeper to prepare the meal, the money to buy the picnic baskets and the dishes, and the time to enjoy the meal. This would mean that this farm, and by extension the region, was well past the pioneer stage (CW 1923, 24).

#### MATERIAL GOODS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRAIRIES

The cover produced in 1923 reinforced the idea that the prairies were highly developed. In the background is an apparently prosperous farm with many modern conveniences; in the foreground, a relatively new and neatly maintained house. The house appears to have been built with many purchased materials, and it is landscaped. The barn also contains manufactured construction items. Through this emphasis on the availability of dimensional lumber and other building products, Canadian Immigration Branch officials wanted to dispel the idea that the West was in the pioneer stage and convince people that they would not have to live in log cabins or sod houses. As early as the 1914 edition of *Canada West*, the government made a point that new houses in the West were being built with concrete foundations, emphasizing their permanence and comparing these houses with the ones settlers left

behind (CW 1914, 3). They directly addressed the subject of homebuilding in the 1925 edition of *Canada West*:

[O]ne of the first essentials to a farm is a warm comfortable house. All kinds of building materials can be had in each of the Provinces of Canada. Advice as to the best plans and equipment for a house in Canada may be obtained from the Supervising architect of the Department of Health, Ottawa, or from the Department of Agriculture in the capital of each Province. Plans and specifications concerning equipment are supplied free. (Inside back cover)

Houses themselves were part of the commercial development of the West, and Canadian officials recognized that no amount of consumer goods would be of interest to farm families if they did not have nice houses to display them in.

Another sign that this region is highly developed is the power lines in front of the house. Electricity was one of the signs of development that potential immigrants were looking for in the West, and Canadian officials made a point of mentioning the existence of extensive power networks. The 1922 *Canada West* noted that "there is in Manitoba a power commission, vested with very wide power in extending the system throughout the rural districts of the Province. The farmers along the power lines will avail themselves of this excellent and cheap means of getting light, heat, and power" (CW 1922, 16). These authors knew that farmers and their families had the option of moving to the city if rural conditions were not livable, and so they emphasized the ease of farm life.

In front of the house is a maintained road and on that road is a car. These things allowed farmers to travel more easily and therefore contributed to the sense of community in the prairies. Automobiles were common subjects in the immigration propaganda and all of these documents suggest that farmers could expect to afford cars themselves (CW 1922, 16). In

fact, the later editions of *Canada West* included pictures of cars full of teenage girls out for an afternoon's entertainment (CW 1921, 3). The Canadian government even encouraged farmers from the United States to travel to Canada by automobile when they immigrated, saying, "the excellent roads throughout all parts of the country lend themselves wonderfully to this means of transportation. Crossing the boundary line that divides the United States from Canada is easily negotiated, the owner of the car having satisfied the boundary officials that he has met all the requirements" (CW 1921, 3). As with other equipment, the Canadian officials hoped that prosperous American farmers would bring their cars with them to the Canadian West. Furthering the sense of community are the two houses that you can see in the background. One very nearby and the other in the distance, these houses suggest that this is a community; you could visit your neighbors with little difficulty, especially if you had a car.

Roads were also valuable for another reason: they allowed children to get to schools. From nearly the beginning of this campaign, the authors emphasized that schools were readily available; they were initially established in five-square-mile districts with at least four residents and at least twelve children between the ages of five and sixteen, but eventually these were consolidated into much larger districts (CW 1922, 22). By the 1920s Canadian officials started to acknowledge that many children went to school by bus. This was a necessity not just because of the distances traveled, but also because of the weather. The 1924 edition of *Canada West* addressed this by saying that "the vehicles used in transporting the children [to school] afford proper protection from inclement weather either summer or winter, and the establishment of consolidated schools has shown a pronounced increase in attendance."<sup>37</sup> Even though farmers in many cases wanted their children to remain farmers as adults, they were also concerned for their education because of the impact of scientific farming. Roads and school buses made it pos-

sible for children living in rural areas to get a better education and the automobile allowed families to interact with their neighbors. This was exactly how Canadian officials had envisioned the development of this region. Mrs. J. O. Smith, a settler in the prairies, said in the 1918 edition of *Canada West*, "We have good roads, which mean much to the farmer, and with automobiles at hand, distance is disappearing. We have rural mail service and telephones and there is no feeling of isolation" (CW 1918, 16). The Canadian advertisements frequently emphasized that life in the West was not the lonely, drab existence that many potential immigrants might have imagined.

#### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PURSUITS

These advertisements went into great detail about the pastimes and social interactions that women could expect in the prairies. As they said, "the farmer and the farmer's wife in central Canada cannot complain of isolation" (CW 1918 16). According to Canadian officials, she also could not complain about the work she had.

[M]odern labour-saving devices, modern heating, lighting, water, and sanitary systems are being adapted more and more on the farms, lessening the women's work and making the home more congenial. The opportunities for social intercourse with friends and neighbours are made more frequent, with the automobile banishing the old handicaps of distance. (CW 1923)

If all the promises came true, women who immigrated to the Canadian West could look forward to lives of leisure, spending a small portion of their day on housework and the majority of their time socializing and relaxing.

This farm is a great example of the society that Canada wanted to create in the West. We can guess from this picture that it is a family farm. To begin with, if we look closely

at the front porch of the house in the foreground, there is a woman sitting in a swing, reading a book. There is also a child sitting on the front steps. The woman demonstrates an important point. Canada repeatedly asserted that women who immigrated to the West would not live lonely lives of drudgery; they would have social and intellectual stimulation. For this woman, she could obtain social interaction through visiting her neighbors. The book on her lap demonstrates that she also had access to intellectual pursuits. These advertisements included a great deal of information on the sorts of intellectual and cultural outlets that women would find on the prairies, including gardening, reading, and music. As the Immigration Branch stated in the 1921 *Canada West*, "there are traveling libraries, traveling motion picture outlets, boys' and girls' clubs and women's institutes. Agricultural fairs are held in all the principal communities. In addition to their educational value they have a distinct social side" (CW 1921, 16). Immigration officials pointed out how easily women could recreate their former lifestyles. For example, they said "the piano trade in central Canada is reported as exceedingly active, and the £80 or £100 required for purchase weights very lightly" (CW British ed. 1911, 33). To attract women immigrants, officials felt that they had to assure them of their happiness.

#### AGRICULTURE IN THE WEST

Giving further evidence that this is a family farm, the farmer depicted was engaged in mixed agriculture. Two men are cutting hay in a large field, and the family has a herd of cattle grazing in the field behind the hay. In the foreground are at least eight horses, not including the four being used in the field. The other animals in the scene include chickens and a dog near the house. Mixed farming was a typical strategy for a family farm, and it was one that the Canadian government encouraged in the early years of the immigration push.



It was also a way of including women in agricultural production. In many of the brochures, women were told that they could raise vegetable gardens and small animals in the Canadian prairies, and that this activity would bring them both money and pleasure (CW 1924, 21).

Another aspect of Canada's campaign that we can see in this image is the presence of farm equipment. The two men in the hay field were using mechanical equipment to cut the hay. The 1927 edition of *Canada West* depicted a man riding a tractor pulling a disc plow, with a caption reading, "The general purpose tractor supplements horse power on many Manitoba farms" (8). One of the reasons why Canadian officials preferred American immigrants was their hope that these farmers would own equipment and bring it with them.

#### CANADA IN THE EMPIRE

One feature that appears on some of the covers is a large Union Jack. It appears to have been added later in 1923 or in 1924 and it is out of scale to the rest of the scene. In fact, it is nearly as large as the house it stands next to. This flag seems to have been added as an afterthought and a way to reinforce to the viewer the importance of imperial institutions in Canada. Without the flag there is nothing in the image to distinguish the scene as particularly Canadian; it could be a landscape in the United States as easily as Canada. Immigration officials did tailor their recruitment efforts to either the United States or Britain, and in these documents they sometimes acknowledged one country or the other. Most of these texts were not specific on this subject.

The dominant feature of this cover is another icon that separated Canada from the United States. As with the flag, this out-of-scale woman was Miss Canada, the traditional representative of the country. Often in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Canadian political cartoons, Miss Canada was depicted as the beautiful, graceful contrast to

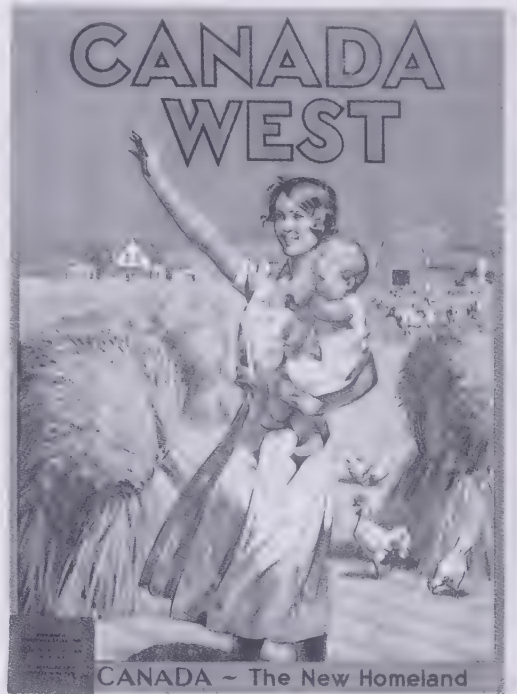


FIG. 2. Cover of *Canada West* in 1930. Photograph courtesy of the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta.

a lecherous, grotesque Uncle Sam. Some cartoonists went to the extreme of showing Uncle Sam in various attempts to molest or rape Miss Canada. She was also a mini-Britannia, a representative of how British institutions were adapted, yet maintained, in the colonial environment. In the case of this particular image, Miss Canada was pulling back a curtain made of grain to show the potential immigrant what would await them in the Canadian West. She symbolized the Canadian government in the sense that she was welcoming people to this new land. Miss Canada was a sort of ambassador, demonstrating the potential of a modern country with a rich British heritage.

A similar cover appeared on the *Canada West* magazine published in 1930. Many of the aspects of the scene depicted on this cover are the same as the 1923-24 cover. There was a modern farmhouse, barn, and outbuildings,

which appear to have been built from manufactured materials. Above the house we can see power lines. The image also suggested mixed farming through the representation of both livestock and grain production.

The most striking feature of this image was the woman with the child. Similar to the woman and child in the 1923 image, she represented the importance of women to the farming system that Canadian officials wanted for the prairies. In order to achieve a society based on family farms, Canada needed to ensure that the male-female ratio in the region was balanced. To achieve this, the Immigration Branch actively recruited single women to the prairies. As mentioned previously, one of the ways in which the Canadian government tried to appeal to women was to assure them that they would not have to give up all the niceties of life in an urban, industrial setting. They wanted women to feel that they were not leaving behind civilization by coming to the West. In this particular case, the woman's fashionable dress was meant to send this message. It may have been store-bought, but if not, it still demonstrates that the woman at least had access to information about fashionable clothing. The message to women was that they would not be held hostage in a man's country, with no outlets of their own.

Many of these themes reappear in the 1928 cover of *Canada West*. In this image we can see a modern farmhouse, barn, and other outbuildings, all of which appear to have been constructed from purchased materials. Additionally, the house is in a fashionable style for the late 1920s, demonstrating that farmers in the Canadian West had access to new architectural plans. We can also see power lines above the house, which, as mentioned earlier, suggest that the West was highly developed. Finally, upon close examination one can see a tiny figure of a woman on the front porch of the house, and she is wearing the short hemline popular in the 1920s. All these elements are repeated from earlier covers, but the 1928 *Canada West* also featured new themes.

## FARM FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

The previously discussed *Canada West* covers focused heavily on women and their place in western Canadian society, but women were not the only subjects of the immigration campaign. Children were another, and we can see this represented in the 1928 cover featuring a young boy. He was hidden under a haystack, giving the appearance that he was at play. Canadian authorities felt that this was an important message. Just as they tried to reassure potential immigrants of enough development to give women a sense of security, they also wanted families to know that they could make happy lives for their children in the Canadian West. The boy was not engaged in farm work; he obviously had the leisure to just play. This suggests that the family was prosperous enough to be able to afford to hire labor for the farm—and that there was labor to hire. As Cecilia Danysk suggests, this was not always the case, and the Canadian government addressed this in their propaganda by attempting to recruit young men who could work as hired hands, as well as by reassuring older, more established farmers that they would have help in their work.<sup>38</sup> This does not mean that all children were free from work on the farm. Some certainly did have to do chores, but according to the propaganda, it was easy work that would be beneficial in teaching children about running a farm. In the 1921 *Canada West* the government said that farm work for children “creates an important interest and builds for splendid citizenship,” as well as providing young people with a means of earning money (6).

These documents emphasized the benefits of the Canadian West for raising children, making statements like “the country is an ideal place for children to grow to strong young manhood and womanhood, with healthy, strong bodies, clean, pure lives, souls with a broad clear outlook, and a vision of things that counts for more than wealth” (CW 1918, 17). Although this statement contained a tacit

admission that farming might not be the most profitable line of work, the officials hoped that families would have ideological reasons for wanting their children to remain on the farm.

The boy on the cover could also refer to a project that many in Canada and Great Britain were advocating at the time. This was a plan to resettle poor, orphaned boys from the British Isles on farms in western Canada. Advocates of this program, known as boy settlement, hoped that it would not only relieve the pressure on the British government to take better care of these children but also provide a labor source for farmers in western Canada. The idea was that these boys would be settled on special farms in the prairies where they would learn farming techniques. This would prepare them for lives as either farm laborers or preferably independent farmers with their own homesteads in the future. Many Canadians expressed interest in this scheme because it provided for a reliable stream of immigrants from a desirable ethnic group who could be trained in the latest techniques of scientific agriculture. One problem the plan might have created was a gender imbalance; the West already had an overwhelmingly male population, and there seems to have been no similar plan to recruit girls.

Another new theme in the 1928 cover was the emphasis on a different type of farming. In much of the previous immigration literature the government had emphasized that farmers could engage in mixed farming. They encouraged this system for several reasons. First, it reduced the risk of failure; if there were a blight that killed all of one crop, you would have other things to sell at the end of the season. Similarly, it also protected farmers against low market values. For immigrants who were new to farming, it gave them a chance to see what crops their homesteads were best suited to and what they had a knack for raising. Finally, if a family needed to subsist from their produce, mixed farming allowed for better nutrition and multiseasonal harvests.

This 1928 cover makes no reference to mixed farming. The only agricultural enter-

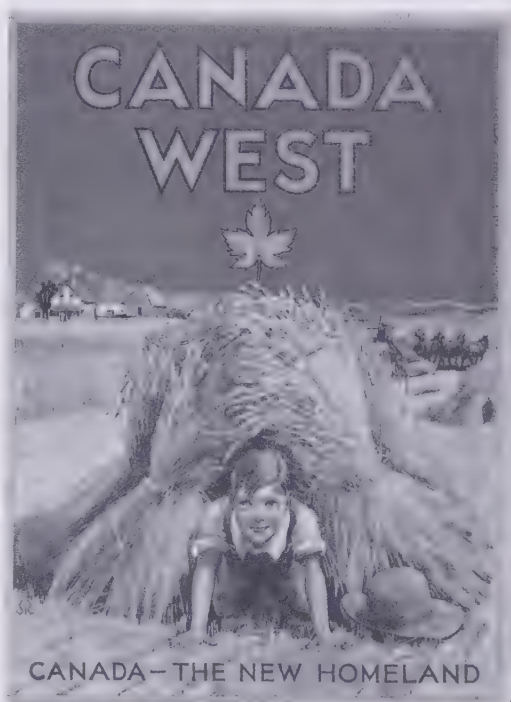


FIG. 3. Cover of *Canada West* in 1928. Photograph courtesy of the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta.

prise we can see in this image is the farmer using the team of four horses to pull a harvester in the field. It is not surprising that this image, produced relatively late in the Canadian immigration campaign, should de-emphasize mixed farming. In the late 1920s Canadian farmers engaged in commercial monoculture. The largest single crop was wheat, and farmers were producing it on a huge scale. Canadian farmers produced enough wheat for the nation to not only be self-sufficient, but to actually be an exporter. From almost the beginning of their advertising campaign, Canada had made note of the large amounts of money that farmers could make producing these kinds of commercial crops. The ultimate goal of the campaign was to populate the prairies with farmers engaged in commercial monoculture.

One final element of this 1928 cover was the prominent maple leaf. It was during this period that the government seems to have adopted the maple leaf as a symbol of Canada.



Its appearance in this image signifies this new use as a symbol.

As we have seen, the Canadian government campaigned actively for immigrants beginning with the election of the Liberal Party in 1896. This campaign lasted into the early 1930s, when the combination of the Great Depression and the threat of war on the horizon gradually drew the government's attention to other topics. This is not to say that Canada completely abandoned attempts to recruit new immigrants after the early 1930s. As late as the 1960s Canada maintained their recruitment office on Trafalgar Square in London, and agents in Britain continued to give presentations to potential immigrants, although by that time they were no longer interested in farmers but instead concentrated on women who could work in industry.

The efficacy of this immigration campaign is still up for debate. In reality, there were many eastern European immigrants, especially from the western part of what is today the Ukraine, and these people helped to shape western Canadian society. In the context of this work, it does not really matter whether or not the ads were effective. In fact, there is no real consensus on this issue; much of the evidence suggests that they were not particularly helpful. What we can see from these advertisements is that Canadian government officials had a very specific image of the society they wanted to create in the prairies. Canadian officials did not want immigration to be determined solely by push and pull factors. They wanted immigrants who either were British or would be amenable to maintaining British institutions. Canadian officials saw the West as a place that should be populated by prosperous, white, Anglo-Saxon or at least Germanic, family farmers who would then contribute to building a modern society with all of the developments and conveniences to be found in eastern Canada. In order to establish their envisioned society, Canadian officials knew that they would have to allay the fears of the families to whom they advertised, and they acknowledged that men asked them-

selves questions such as, "Can I take my wife and family with me, with assurance that social conditions will be congenial, that the children's education will not be neglected, and that when they grow up they will find themselves surrounded by opportunities such as are not to be expected in my present circumstances? No man, certainly no head of a family, can ask himself more important questions than these" (CW 1924, 1). These documents demonstrate that the bureaucrats who ran the Immigration Branch were intent on recruiting a specific type of immigrants and that these immigrants can be seen on the cover of *Canada West*.

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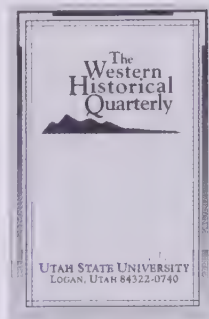
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Cather Studies 5: Willa Cather's Ecological Imagination*. Edited by Susan J. Rosowski. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xiv + 327 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliographical references, index. \$35.00 paper.

In "A Guided Tour of Ecocriticism with Excursions to Catherland," one of the many fine essays contained in this new volume of *Cather Studies*, Cheryl Glotfelty remarks, "If the last decade of Cather [scholarship] has been the 'gender and sexuality' period, the new millennium may well begin with a fruitful ecocritical decade." It is ironic, given this prediction, that not all of the sixteen essays presented in *Cather Studies 5* fall within the emerging field of ecocriticism. Indeed, the most impressive piece in the collection, Charles Johanningsmeier's "Unmasking Willa Cather's 'Mortal Enemy,'" is a tour de force of old-fashioned prototype-hunting that has nothing to do with Cather's "ecological imagination." Nevertheless, those essays that do grapple with Cather's complex and frequently contradictory vision of the natural world suggest that Glotfelty may be right. As a critical approach—or, rather, as a set of approaches used to explore a specific literary theme (the relationship between the human and the non-human)—ecocriticism seems made for Cather, a writer intensely aware of *place* and its power over the imagination.

Sharply contrasting portraits of Cather's environmental sensibility emerge from this collection, thereby suggesting the protean nature of eco-interpretation and its promise for future Cather scholars. For example, while Joseph W. Meeker reads Cather as a straightforward celebrant of land-development and laments the novelist's "disinterest in her ecological context," Thomas J. Lyon praises Cather as a life-long learner whose ever-expanding consciousness enabled her to "see and feel the environment in a participative, intimate way." Drawing upon the philosophy of Aldo Leopold, Patrick K. Dooley demonstrates that Cather was in many

ways inconsistent in her environmental thinking: in some places her fiction espouses the homocentric values of "wise-use conservation"; in others it celebrates wilderness for its own sake, calling for "hands-off preservation." For Dooley, the only constant in Cather's treatment of environmental themes is her sense of human beings as custodians or "stewards" of land they never really own. In contrast, Susan J. Rosowski sets aside the issue of Cather's environmental ethics and focuses instead on the "comic form" of her oeuvre, with its anti-tragic emphasis on natural processes of rebirth and renewal—processes that tie her characters to the natural world.

Other noteworthy essays in this exciting collection include Janis P. Stout's portrait of Cather as a meticulous observer of flora and fauna, Joseph Urgo's discussion of the National Parks Movement as an ideological context for *My Ántonia*, Guy Reynolds's comparison of Cather with other place-sensitive modernists such as Frank Lloyd Wright, and Ann Romines's meditation (not ecocriticism, but welcome nonetheless) on the centrality of Cather's Virginia experience in her life and art. Carefully edited and refreshingly free of jargon, *Willa Cather's Ecological Imagination* is perhaps the best volume yet in a series that continues to offer fresh perspectives on one of the twentieth-century's greatest novelist.

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*Out of Place: The Writings of Robert Kroetsch*. By Simona Bertacco. Bern: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002. 280 pp. Bibliography, index. \$56.95 paper.

The 1965 Johnny Cash rendition of E.T. Rouse's "Orange Blossom Special" includes the line, "I don't care if I do die do die do die do die." Robert Kroetsch's *Seed Catalogue* (1986) echoes the line. In *Out of Place: The Writings of Robert Kroetsch*, Simona Bertacco says the pas-

sage shows how Kroetsch pushes "words out of meaning" and "makes language abandon . . . its conventional function to become intransitive and intensive." Kroetsch, however, increases the number of repetitions and ends on the wrong word in the sequence, throwing the allusion into doubly new territory as it moves from a song about an American train into a Canadian poem, tricking Bertacco into thinking he invented what he borrowed.

Readers who keep in mind that Kroetsch the trickster presents ironic allusions and intentional misquotes, borrows his most original moments, and undercuts unifying tendencies can learn much from *Out of Place*. Bertacco sometimes fits things together too neatly (a sign of being tricked), yet I admire her for daring to confront the riotous excess of Kroetsch's texts armed only with contemporary literary theories and an unstated conviction that she can make sense of this material. Bertacco's "basic argument is that Kroetsch's work reveals the ultimate dismissal of the thematic quest for identity."

Bertacco begins with a discussion of Kroetsch's early engagement with literary theory, noting that "postmodernism identified . . . a global revolutionary movement set to debunk any form of dominant institution." Part 2 studies unusual pairings of Kroetsch's poetry and fiction: *The Ledger* and *Gone Indian*, *The Studhorse Man* and *Completed Field Notes*. Part 3 covers *Seed Catalogue*, *What the Crow Said*, *Badlands*, and *Fieldnotes*. The book ends with Bertacco's August 2000 interview with Kroetsch. The mixture of poetry, fiction, and critical essays discussed suggests the complexity of Kroetsch's career; the interview adds to the lore of Kroetsch on Kroetsch. The book does not discuss recent works in depth, or—oddly, in a book titled *Out of Place*—Kroetsch's travel book about his native province, *Alberta*.

Bertacco asserts that Kroetsch evokes the prairies as "a mythical place," "re-perceiving the prairie experience through techniques and narrative modes . . . similar to those employed in the genre of magic realism in painting." "Kroetsch reads the prairie as the metonymy of Canada." Given Kroetsch's postmodern program of debunking the prairie, however, perhaps his presen-

tation of the Great Plains challenges traditional archetypes. As Kroetsch writes in *Completed Field Notes*, "believe you me I have a few tricks up my sleeve myself."

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*Restoring the Burnt Child: A Primer*. By William Kloefkorn. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. 169 pp. \$22.00.

William Kloefkorn's second book of memoirs is a blueprint for restoring lives scorched by the fires of fundamentalist Christianity, WCTU crusaders, cigarettes and whiskey, kitchen matches, sore throats, and thermonuclear explosions. The twelve chapters cover Kloefkorn's life from age nine, when he torched the family kitchen, to age thirteen, when he delivered news of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to subscribers of the *Wichita Beacon*. The book fleshes out stories and personalities already familiar to readers of his poetry: parents and grandparents; life in Attica, Kansas; the slaughter of swallows and rabbits on grandfather's farm; landmarks like Turtle Rock and townmarks like Butch Mischler's Pool Hall and Urie's Barber Shop. Despite the epic suggestions of the number twelve, this book is more focused than Kloefkorn's 1997 *This Death by Drowning*. (Is fire more contained than water, and should we anticipate forthcoming memoirs of air and earth?) Still, jumpcuts across time and geography open the author's scope: like a Twain tale or a Keillor monologue, Kloefkorn's stories begin here, skip to there, circle upon themselves through allusions to previous chapters and digressions which prove to be not so digressive, bringing us safely back through time and space to where we began. "Chronology has at best a habit of collapsing," Kloefkorn writes, echoing Eliot's famous dictum about time present, past, and future and reiterating a philosophy found in Kloefkorn's poetry early (*Alvin Turner as Farmer*, 1972) and late (*Loup River Psalter*, 2001).

*Restoring the Burnt Child* is also an ideal primer for writers. Although beginners might

have trouble appreciating (or controlling) a structure that seems so random while being so focused, all writers can grasp—and all readers enjoy—Kloefkorn's vivid recreations of a way of life going fast if not already gone, his talent for seizing the most luminous detail of our gray lives, his love of language, and his feel for the American idiom. Particularly striking is Kloefkorn's observation that "any story relies upon a melody, however subtle that melody might be." Particularly pleasurable is the joy of recognizing in a Kloefkorn phrase some subtle echo of one of the local or literary masters of language—Twain or Chaucer, father and grandmother, Sister Hook and her gospel ministry, the denizens of pool hall or barber shop—described elsewhere in the book.

As history both personal and communal, and as performance both written and oral, this book gives us the old maestro at his best.

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*Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance.* Edited by Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. xiii + 362 pp. Appendix, notes, bibliographical references, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

From our current vantage point, the true legacy of Vine Deloria Jr.'s scholarship and activism can neither be fully measured nor overstated. We know with certainty, however, that the landscape of Native American scholarship has been permanently altered—for the best. *Native Voices* honors Deloria's contributions through the presentation of original Native scholarship inspired by his model. As its editors observe, "Deloria has influenced a whole generation of younger Indian scholars to be self-consciously indigenous thinkers—to reclaim an American Indian intellectual tradition, along with a political activism rooted in the oral traditions of our peoples and the wisdom of our elders and ancestors." The American Indian intellec-

tual tradition resuscitated by Deloria is alive and well within the chapters of this volume.

Edited and written by an impressive array of contemporary Native scholars and artists, the volume is divided into four parts emphasizing the themes of Native identity and resistance. Only a few chapters deal directly with Plains subject matter. Clara Sue Kidwell explores the ethnoastronomy (star knowledge) of several Plains tribes (the Pawnees, Wichitas, Osages, and Lakotas) as well as Native perspectives on the Medicine Wheel. Henrietta Mann provides an excellent overview of American Indian religious freedom, including discussion of important Plains sacred sites: Bear Butte and the Lakotas' *Mato-tipila*, or Bear's Lodge ("Devil's Tower"). George Tinker raises strong concerns about non-Indian (i.e., "New Age") appropriation and transformation of Lakota spirituality and ceremony, which he considers the "final conquest." The remainder of the chapters are broadly applicable to Plains scholars on a number of levels, with especially strong contributions in the areas of law, history, religion, and cultural studies.

This volume should be required reading for upper division undergraduate as well as graduate level Native American Studies courses. It will also prove highly useful to a broad variety of scholars and educated lay people interested in Native American Studies. *Native Voices* is a fitting tribute to the legacy of the "Dean of Native American Studies," the one the editors reverently refer to as "Coyote Old Man."

BETH R. RITTER

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
and Native American Studies Program  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

*Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America.* By Eva Marie Garrouette. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. xv + 223 pp. Illustrations, table, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth, 19.95 paper.

Cherokee sociologist Eva Garrouette has fashioned a genuine contribution to the study of the American Indian in the United States.



Herself a mixed-race person of Caucasian and Indian heritage, she focuses on the always troublesome and often controversial issue of Indian identity, one that pervades the consciousness of all Native Americans, and not a few non-Native folks. Her straightforward narrative is informed by published and unpublished sources in law, history, social science, and literature and enhanced by numerous in-depth interviews with Indian and non-Indian people. What results constitutes the single comprehensive book-length examination of "Indian-ness" in print.

Great Plains tribal and individual examples are included throughout the volume to help illustrate the historical and contemporary problem of deciding exactly who is and, as importantly, who is not identifiable as Indian. Garrouette offers a fascinating congeries of attempts to resolve this elusive issue. The federal government through administrative fiat, court decisions, and legislation has struggled valiantly to provide an immutable standard, but has only succeeded in dispensing confusing and contradictory dictums. Each tribe across the nation has weighed in with a particularistic definition of Indian identity, inextricably tied to tribal membership, but this has done little beyond reflecting Native peoples' dissatisfaction with endless measuring and assessments of blood quantum and cultural attributes.

Refreshingly, Garrouette steps outside and around most scholars and others who have participated in the continuing discourse on Indian-ness by adopting a new paradigm—radical indigenism. As she deftly explains, radical indigenism presumes the efficacy of uniquely Indian approaches and models in pursuing questions of identity. She argues that established academic disciplines will likely fall a bit short in the search for satisfactory explanations unless they recognize the worth of alternative modes of research and analysis. Her commonsensical assertion seems to me eminently reasonable, and "radical" only in not being previously accepted.

Praiseworthy as this multidisciplinary effort is, I would have enjoyed reading more. One fairly serious shortcoming is the absence of a hemi-

spheric comparison of Indian-ness. A chapter that placed the Canadian Native experience alongside those of Mexico and Latin America would have revealed much about the historical anomaly that was and remains the US norm in regard to Indian identity. Also, a more extensive deconstruction of American Indian authored novels and poetry reflecting identity issues would have added an eloquent perspective. These caveils aside, this book deserves a large readership.

TERRY P. WILSON

Departments of History and Ethnic Studies  
California State University at Hayward

*Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western.* By Armando José Prats. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002. xxi + 317 pp. Photographs, filmography, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

The relationship between the Great Plains and the Hollywood Western has always been a strange one. The "classic" era of the Hollywood Western, the period between roughly 1864 and 1887, is also the "classic" era of the Great Plains—the era of the pioneer, the gunslinger, the cattleman, and, of course, the Indian fighter. Oddly, the Great Plains are rarely featured prominently in Hollywood Westerns; rather, it is the desert Southwest that is most often depicted. The flowing grasslands and wooded river valleys upon which the events of the "classic" era of the Western unfolded are often shown as rocky wastelands. These are almost non-settings, as if the land itself were merely a backdrop against which action takes place, rather than a central part of the action itself (and land, as we all know, has always been the central player in Native American-US relations). The Great Plains are virtually invisible in many classic Westerns, even though they are at the heart of the action being presented.

Armando José Prats makes a similar case for Native Americans in *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western*, arguing that while Native Americans are at the center of the action in the classic Hollywood Western, the way they are rendered makes them

essentially invisible. What Prats contends is that representations of Native Americans focus on their essential "otherness" from Euro-Americans, and that by reflecting only "otherness," this mode of representation becomes a mode of erasure. Prats suggests that "otherness" becomes absence and absence "otherness." Instead of Native Americans we often see only their smoke signals or the arrow-ridden bodies and burned cabins left from an attack. In this way, Native Americans are only present in their absence, and indeed their absence makes them more distant and threatening. When we do see Native Americans in Hollywood Westerns, Prats suggests that they are often mute (or if they do communicate, do so in grunts and hand gestures), nameless, sometimes even faceless. They are defined by their otherness, and their otherness is itself defined by absence—absence of a voice, of a name, of a face.

If Prats's argument sounds a bit convoluted, it is. But Prats does a sound job illustrating his ideas with examples from a wide range of classic Westerns. Each of the book's six chapters focuses on one or at most a few specific films and provides a detailed interpretation through one element of Prats's argument. In this way, he builds his case slowly and carefully, so that by the end of the book the convolutions of his argument are reasonably clear.

*Invisible Natives* will be appreciated by scholars interested in representations of Native Americans, the American Frontier, and by all those who watched Saturday matinees as a child.

PETER N. PEREGRINE

Department of Anthropology  
Lawrence University

*The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau, 1582-1799.* By Maria F. Wade. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. xxvi +293 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

Although this book promises to examine the Indians who lived in West Texas between the late sixteenth century to the end of the 1700s, most of the work—and the main original contribution the author makes—deals with

two Spanish expeditions of exploration that occurred in the late seventeenth century. The author, an ethnohistorian, has provided a new translation of the 1675 expedition of Fernando del Bosque and Fr. Juan Larios, which left the northern Mexican town of Monclova in April, crossed the Rio Grande, and entered the Edwards Plateau before returning to its point of origin in June. In addition to the excellent translation, the author also provides commentary, pointing out modern place-names and discussing the many small Indian groups—mainly Coahuiltecans—the expedition encountered.

The author also provides a new translation of the diary of the expedition of Juan Dominguez de Mendoza and Fr. Nicolas Lopez, which left El Paso in December 1683, traveled east to the Colorado River of Texas—between the mouths of the Concho and the San Saba—before returning to El Paso in July 1684. Although Herbert Eugene Bolton had previously published translations of the diaries of both expeditions, the fresh translations and new annotations (which reflect a century of new scholarship) are particularly valuable. The author also includes another version of Mendoza's travel diary which she discovered at the University of New Mexico containing a radically different viewpoint from the previously published diary. The new diary, which Wade assumes was written by Mendoza, downplays the perfidy of the Jumano chief, Juan Sabeata, and refers to the problems the commander experienced with his own Spanish troops, which led Mendoza to sentence two of his compatriots to death.

Although the rest of the book examines Spanish relations with the Apaches of Texas during the eighteenth century, the author offers little new information not already supplied by previous historians such as William Dunn and Elizabeth John. This work's main contribution, therefore, is the translation of the various diaries of the Spanish exploratory expeditions into Texas during the late seventeenth century.

F. TODD SMITH

Department of History  
University of North Texas



*Coacoochee's Bones: A Seminole Saga.* By Susan A. Miller. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. xix + 264 pp. Photographs, maps, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

In *Coacoochee's Bones* Susan Miller tells the outstanding story of an outstanding leader in an outstanding manner. The repeated use of "outstanding" is necessary because Miller has produced a unique work on the history of the Seminole people, not just Coacoochee. The narrative is written from the point of view of a Seminole, with insights an outsider wouldn't have. Furthermore, she makes judicious use of primary historical Seminole, Mexican, and US sources and of published material, enhanced with knowledge garnered from anthropological studies. The result is a highly informative and readable book.

Miller does not shrink from taking stands on controversial historical and contemporary themes related to the Black Seminoles (whom she identifies as Maroons). She also seems to advocate the return of the Seminole Indians to the lands they abandoned almost 150 years ago in Mexico, seemingly not giving due consideration to the fact that the Kickapoo Indians and the Black Seminoles (known as Mascogos in Mexico) who remained behind and still occupy the land would mightily resist the notion. She also seems to believe that the exclusion of the Seminole Freedmen from the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma in 2000 was acceptable. Yet, controversial as these points of view might be, Miller states them in a reasoned and clear manner, which leads even a skeptical reader like this reviewer to pause and consider them.

In the end, Miller's work is above all a great contribution to the historical literature of the Seminole Indians in particular and of the American Indian in general. It should be read by anyone who wants to know about the travails suffered by the members of an Indian tribe at the hands of the American government, from their own point of view. As Miller herself identifies her work, this is "decolonizing" history at its very best.

ALCIONE M. AMOS  
Washington, DC

*Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire.* By Tom Chaffin. New York: Hill and Wang, 2002. xxx + 559 pp. Photographs, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper.

Who was John Charles Frémont (1813-1890)? Tom Chaffin attempts to map his mind's terrain, but Frémont reveals little. More crucial than lack of personal papers is Frémont's character: Chaffin declares his writings to be "duplicitous apologia."

Chaffin, therefore, travels well-worn paths. Ferol Egan's *Frémont: Explorer for a Restless Nation* (1977, 1985) comes to mind. While lacking Egan's richness of detail, Chaffin presents a fuller life. Where Egan dotes on "the great love affair" between Frémont and wife Jessie, Chaffin details Frémont's self-destructive womanizing. By 1856, he reports, a "growing distance" between the couple quickly became "a chill."

Some events defy explanation. Why did Frémont drag along a heavy, useless twelve-pounder mountain howitzer on his Second Expedition, needlessly angering Army brass? Others do not engage Chaffin. Whereas Egan denounces Frémont's California Indian hunts and slaying of three unarmed Californios, Chaffin shows little concern.

Chaffin's introduction makes the best case for Frémont; his text graphically tears him down. By 1844, loner Frémont held a "well-advanced sense of his own importance and talents," an arrogance leading to clashes with superiors up to the president. He played a "nervous prevaricator" during California's 1846 Bear Flag Revolt; displayed "limited knowledge" of politics in 1856; exhibited "bizarre" behavior in command of St. Louis; and "neglect[ed]" duties as Arizona Territorial governor. Finally, Frémont's financial finessing "bordered on outright fraud."

Why, then, even bother? Chaffin answers well. Frémont and Jessie were America's beautiful couple, similar to Jack and Jacqueline Kennedy during the 1960s. Name another presidential candidate's wife so honored with campaign songs. Frémont exemplified America's manifest destiny when he waved Old Glory from 13,500-foot Frémont Peak.



Frémont was the right man in the right place. He had "a jeweler's eye for sorting out complexities of landscape," delineating natural boundaries and drainage systems. His sense of the extent and diversity of plants debunked the notion of the infertile "Great American Desert." Chaffin, who traveled Frémont's trails with the same love of land, shines in the retelling.

Frémont's First Expedition in 1842 marked the route to South Pass; his Second, 1843-1844, took him to Oregon and then through California's Great Central Valley. Reports, published in 1843 and 1845, sparked "Oregon Fever." Written from the heart, they were a paean to new land. People read them, while finely detailed maps supplied notes for emigrants. Frémont forced Americans "to conceive of their nation, for the first time, as a sea-to-sea empire." For this, the United States is indebted to him.

ROBERT J. CHANDLER  
Lafayette, California

*Children of the Western Plains: The Nineteenth Century Experience.* By Marilyn Irvin Holt. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 2003. x + 224 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.00.

The small but growing collection of literature on children in the nineteenth-century American West has been expanded with Marilyn Holt's book about youngsters who migrated to the Great Plains during the 1800s. *Children of the Western Plains* examines the attention adults paid to young settlers as well as these youngsters' own sense of involvement in the Plains experience. Recognizing the diversity of residents, Holt considers the lives of native-born white, European immigrant, and African American children who contributed to the settlement process. Included in these numbers are military, missionary, and government employee dependents. The author examines young settlers' experiences within the categories of perceptions and expectations, travel and settlement, community and family life, education, work and play, and mortality.

Whether they lived on the Great Plains during pre-territorial, territorial, or early statehood periods, youngsters received attention from adults who often tried to replicate life back home. Immigrants and African Americans attempted to preserve their own traditions and customs even if they lived in a dominantly white American town. Sometimes whole communities relocated together, and bigotry and racism varied among the settlements. Children's lives revolved around home—whether they lived in dugouts, soddies, or adobe dwellings—and church and community families. Adults built schools, organized Sunday schools, and provided church and social opportunities. Education emphasized basic skills and literacy and varied from home schooling to classroom instruction, depending upon population. Early settlement children learned to work, and they found time to play. They also knew droughts and blizzards, "quitters and stickers," family crises and separations, illness and death.

Young people wrote diaries, letters, and journals, and reminiscences later as adults. Through these primary documents and a number of contemporary photographs, Holt paints a picture of childhood on the Plains. She does not mention, however, how many primary sources she analyzed. How many of these records were actually written by children? How many were reminiscences with a "child-turned-adult" perspective? From the notes section it appears the author used at least sixteen diaries and letters and sixty-nine reminiscences. She also includes several secondary references that deal with overland migration and frontier families in the Plains and Western states, though she overlooked *Children's Voices from the Trail* (2002), which examines the child's perspective of the westward movement and might have been useful to her study. Even so, *Children of the Western Plains* is a worthwhile addition to the growing collection of literature about youngsters in the nineteenth-century American West.

ROSEMARY G. PALMER  
Department of Literacy  
Boise State University

*Lynching in Colorado, 1859-1919.* By Stephen J. Leonard. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002. xiii + 246 pp. Photographs, maps, tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.

The term lynching likely conjures up in the minds of most Americans images of robed and hooded white men in the states of the Old Confederacy taking the law into their own hands to punish black males accused of violating white womanhood. Groups known as Regulators "enforced the law" in South Carolina as early as 1790. Lynching remained a form of punishment in Southern states until well into the twentieth century, despite the fact that most residents of the region frowned upon it.

Judge Lynch's powerful ghost prowled Colorado for more than half a century, "in part because he could claim that from 1859 to 1861 he was an angel of civilization, often operating through the People's Courts, bringing order from chaos." The lynching of William Van Horn on December 21, 1863, for the murder of Josiah Copeland, his rival in love, was a milestone that "marked the advance of civilization just as schools churches and newspapers did." Troops from the First Cavalry and thousands of other onlookers witnessed this entertaining event.

Territorial judges first arrived in Colorado in 1861, their presence signaling that law with government backing had arrived, a fact pleasing to most Colorado residents. Leading citizens in the large towns believed that lynching discouraged much needed laborers from moving to the territory and frightened away prospective investors. Its hardcore advocates were convinced that the deadly ritual was a signal to would-be miscreants that their crimes would not be tolerated. Other supporters maintained that it was preferred to legal execution: it saved money, frightened felons away, and extracted confessions. Race sometimes played a role in determining who was sentenced to eternity. After 1870 a majority of those lynched were men identified by Anglo Americans as "Mexicans."

*Lynching in Colorado* is a social and political history of considerable impact. Thorough, scholarly, thoughtful, and well written, it is an

engrossing account of lynching as a form of punishment and social control by a keen-eyed observer of the nineteenth-century West.

JESSE T. MOORE JR.  
Department of History  
University of Rochester

*Archbishop A.-A. Taché of St. Boniface: The "Good Fight" and the Illusive Vision.* By Raymond J. A. Huel. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2003. xxv + 429 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95. paper.

Alexandre Taché, one of the very first Canadians to join the French Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who arrived in Canada in 1841, was sent to work in Canada's Northwest in 1845 where he became second bishop of St. Boniface in 1853, and later archbishop. He remained there until his death in 1894, a half-century during which the region was transformed from a vast hunting emporium for furs to a refuge for tens of thousands of Canadian, American, and European settlers brought into the area after 1860 on the rapidly expanding tracks of American and then Canadian railways. Taché built up the Catholic Church of the Northwest to include dozens of missionary stations, infirmaries, hospitals, day schools, and boarding schools, in addition to a college, a mission-supply network, and small newspapers. In the process, he became a leading player in the social and political controversies of the period, including the Red River uprising (1869-70) and Northwest Rebellion (1884-85) led by Métis leader Louis Riel, and the Manitoba schools question (1890 ff.), political controversies that became national issues in Canada.

Raymond Huel has written a thoroughly researched and documented biography of Taché, one that will no doubt become a necessary reference for anyone seeking to understand the man and his times. He emphasizes Taché's vision, his dream of building a new Québec in the Canadian West, a sister province to the French and Catholic Province of

Québec. While there are no significant new discoveries here, and the text at times is repetitive, the book constitutes good, solid, and thorough reporting. In the mass of factual details that are noted, this reader spotted only two errors, the first when the Sisters of Charity are said to have arrived in Red River in 1841, rather than 1844, the second when the American General Douglas MacArthur is said to have belonged to the US Marine Corps, rather than the US Army.

Huel is harsh in his judgment of Taché, a man who has often been presented as larger than life by hagiographic writers. We are told repeatedly that he was lacking in leadership and interpersonal skills, an authoritarian deficient in the charisma and charm necessary to win people over to his point of view. Some may consider Huel overly severe in this regard.

All in all, Raymond Huel has written a sound and reliable biography of one of Canada's leading churchmen, one that should stand the test of time.

ROBERT CHOQUETTE

Department of Classics and Religious Studies  
University of Ottawa

*The Standing Bear Controversy: Prelude to Indian Reform.* By Valerie Sherer Mathes and Richard Lowitt. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003. x + 211 pp. Photographs, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Standing Bear v. George Crook, an 1879 case brought in the Federal District Court in Omaha, is today little more than a footnote in United States Indian law. Yet this case, like thousands of other cases that American Indians brought to US courts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was an important effort by one group of Indians to define their relationship with the United States through law. The Ponca story is among the best known, but certainly no more tragic than many of the other Indian cases.

The Ponca's lands were given to the Lakota, without their knowledge or consent. They were

removed to the Indian Territory after a negotiation process in which, since such terms as "land," "sale," and "removal" had no meaning in the Ponca language, they could not possibly have understood what was happening to them. In the Indian Territory they died by the hundreds, a result, in the view of the Office of Indian Affairs, to be "expected" whenever a cold weather tribe was moved to the south. Standing Bear walked back, carrying the body of the sixteen-year-old son he had promised to bury in his own country. He was arrested by the army and held in Fort Omaha. With the help of white friends he challenged his imprisonment, arguing that an Indian had as much right to travel in the United States as did any other person. At stake was the whole question of the legal status of Indians, and Indian citizenship.

*The Standing Bear Controversy* is a welcome addition to the steady series of books describing the legal history of Indians in the United States. More than any other population in America, Indians repeatedly went to the courts to seek redress for the injustice done them time after time. Each case is different, as each struggle takes a different legal form. Standing Bear nominally won his case, when the United States decided not to appeal, but the Ponca never got back their lands. Indian sovereignty and the entire question of the legal status of Indians was deeply rooted in the fundamental issue of who owned Indians' land. The forced removal of Indians from their lands was the central fact of the development of the American West. This is an important study of one part of that history.

SIDNEY L. HARRING

School of Law  
City University of New York

*Prairie Peddlers: The Syrian-Lebanese in North Dakota.* By William C. Sherman, Paul Whitney, and John Guerrero. Bismarck, ND: University of Mary Press, 2002. vi + 404pp. Photographs, maps, notes, appendices, index. \$28.95.

This remarkable ethnographic study of the Syrian-Lebanese in North Dakota is unique.



The data and information are original, never mind that the voices heard are nearly those of the early settlers, certainly those of their children. The authors use the records of the late 1930s (early 1940s) Federal Writers Projects and the Works Progress Administration to understand the reasons for Arab migration to North Dakota and the Great Plains, their employment practices, life styles (marriage patterns, culinary habits), and religious traditions, their distribution, settlements, institutions (or lack thereof), and finally their near total assimilation.

If it were homesteading that attracted many Syrians to the Midwest, it was peddling that made them successful. Homesteading also explains why more Lebanese than Syrians settled there. Syrians from Mt. Lebanon came from smaller, rural communities and farmed. Those from Syria proper were often from Damascus and Aleppo, established cities.

An old Arab proverb states "Trade takes a man far" and if Syrians do anything well it is buying and selling. An entire economic chain developed among them wherein Syrian wholesalers in the Northeast supplied "peddlers" with goods that they brought to needy customers throughout the West. To facilitate economic success, the community published a *Syrian Business Directory* (1908), which included the names and addresses of every Syrian enterprise in the United States. Peddling Syrians is not a stereotype. It was their signature occupation.

Another distinguishing characteristic of this book is its inclusion and respect for the early, oft-ignored Arab Muslim settlers. If anything, emphasis has always been on the Christian emigrants (of all denominations and rites) who settled in large Northeastern cities. Today's Arab-American scholarship, of course, can't and doesn't overlook Muslims, but to see how the Syrian Muslims at the turn of the century accommodated rural American society (and vice versa) is an eye-opener. Many scholars claim that the first Mosque in the United States was in Ross, North Dakota.

*Prairie Peddlers* is a study in rural assimilation that broadens our understanding of the

entire Syrian-Lebanese experience in this country. Here were communities without their own churches which elsewhere served as the source of ethnic maintenance. To be a Syrian or Lebanese American meant being a Melkite, Maronite, or Antiochian Orthodox. Without churches, assimilation would proceed rapidly, as was the case in North Dakota. These communities did struggle to stay alive via the *Mahrajans* or picnics they regularly held.

What caught my attention was how their isolation created a gap in knowledge about their own roots and traditions as well as the larger socio-cultural and political forces that shaped both Syrian-Lebanese identity and assimilation all over the United States. While the authors did do their homework using the commonly available information, they do not relate the attitudes, knowledge, and opinions of the Syrian-Lebanese to larger historical issues. This situation is evident, for example, in how the group identified itself and how the authors attempt to adjust for it. Throughout the text there is reference to Arabic people. Arabic is a language. Arab is a people. Arabic-speaking people would be accurate. In all fairness, however, the modern usage seems to be "Arabic people," but it is incorrect.

Were the Syrian-Lebanese Syrians or Lebanese or both? They came as Syrians, they thought of themselves as Syrians, and even spoke "Syrian" (another error). In any given chapter, they are referred to as either or both, often in contradiction to the said plan of the book. Though this is no real problem for knowledgeable readers, others might get confused. Yet this is not the authors' fault. Many Syrians became Lebanese after World War II and after a concerted effort by the Maronite/Lebanese owned *Al-Hoda* press. After years of struggle and debate, the solution was to call the community Syrian-Lebanese.

Being an ethnographic study that allows its subjects to speak in the first person, *Prairie Peddlers* offers no interpretative analysis in terms of causality. For example, the authors quote the early histories of the Syrian-Lebanese that indicate the group was politically inept. No reason is given. It might have some-

thing to do with the nature of the host society because the Syrian-Lebanese in Latin America have claimed the presidency of at least two countries and countless other municipal governments. They have now won political offices here as well, and oddly enough many come from the Dakotas and the Midwest.

*Prairie Peddlers* incorporates pages of "data" (immigrant names, place of origin, landownership, date of naturalization, and so on). Rare photographs add to its merits. All in all, it is a great read.

PHILIP M. KAYAL

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Seton Hall University

*The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley.* By R. Alton Lee. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002. xvii + 283 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

R. Alton Lee has produced an engaging book that details the full life of John R. Brinkley. As someone interested in quackery in the US, I already knew Brinkley as an exemplar of this genre, but there is much more to him. He was a complex man who carried many labels, some contradictory: quack, caring healer; devoted family man, liar and con-man; would be Governor, community booster, and radio station entrepreneur, the latter as a way to promote mail-order sales of his medical remedies and also to draw in patients to his hospital.

Lee's biography is an informative and entertaining account of this larger-than-life character. The author tells of Brinkley's medical education at the eclectic Bennett Medical College in Chicago while working nights at Western Union to support his wife and family, of his itinerant medical practices as an "undergraduate physician" in North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Arkansas, ending up in Kansas with a new wife and family. It was in

Kansas that he obtained his MD degree from the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery, formerly the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas, which shortly thereafter was revealed by the Kansas City Star to be a diploma mill selling medical degrees (with a high school diploma if needed) for \$1,000. Lee then follows Brinkley's life as a doctor providing, to put it mildly, unorthodox treatments for impotence (goat testicle transplants) and prostate problems (injections of colored water after a partial vasectomy). His wife, also an "MD" from the KC College of Medicine and Surgery, was an associate in his practice.

Lee recounts Brinkley's flamboyant style of life after he became rich, and also his political aspirations. He was a write-in candidate for governor of Kansas and supported many Democratic politicians, most likely because Democrats were in power, while also supporting, quietly, the American Fascist movement.

Brinkley had devoted supporters and ardent detractors, one of his foremost opponents being the redoubtable Morris Fishbein of the American Medical Association, and it was Brinkley's ruinous decision to sue Fishbein for libel that brought about his ultimate fall.

Lee gives not only a comprehensive account of John Brinkley's life and fortunes, from poverty to riches to bankruptcy, but is also even-handed, portraying Brinkley rather affectionately. Important questions are raised. Why do people resort to quacks? Was John Brinkley merely a con-man and charlatan or could he have been an advanced medical thinker practicing cutting-edge medicine? Was Morris Fishbein, an indefatigable foe of quackery, conducting a vindictive witch-hunt or a public spirited exposé of harmful fraud?

This fascinating book with its extensive annotations and source references is both a good read and a throughgoing assessment of one of America's foremost twentieth-century quacks.

BOB MCCOY

Golden Valley, Minnesota

# NOTES AND NEWS

## FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

We are pleased to announce that the 2004 Frederick C. Luebke Award for outstanding regional scholarship has been awarded to Jill E. Martin, of Quinnipiac University, for her essay, "'The Greatest Evil': Interpretations of Indian Prohibition Laws, 1832-1953," (Winter 2003, Vol. 23/No. 1). The prize, named for the founder of the *Quarterly*, is given each year for the best article published in the *Great Plains Quarterly*. The Frederick C. Luebke Award includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

## CALL FOR PAPERS:

### "EDUCATION ON THE GREAT PLAINS"

The *Great Plains Quarterly* will be publishing a special issue on Education and the Great Plains. Submissions appropriate for this issue may include historical studies of education or educators, research on educational content or pedagogy related to the Plains, analyses of literary accounts of education, and studies focusing on education relevant to specific racial, ethnic, and other cultural groups located in the Great Plains. The initial deadline for submissions will be July 1, 2004. Manuscript and submission guidelines can be found at: <<http://www.unl.edu/plains/publications/GPQ/gpqinst.html>> Send your submissions or questions to: Charles A. Braithwaite, Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0313, (402) 472-6178, <[cbraithwaite2@unl.edu](mailto:cbraithwaite2@unl.edu)>

## HOMESTEAD HERITAGE CENTER

The Homestead National Monument of America, Beatrice, Nebraska, will be developing a

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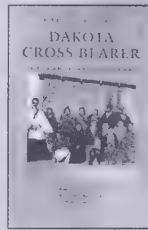
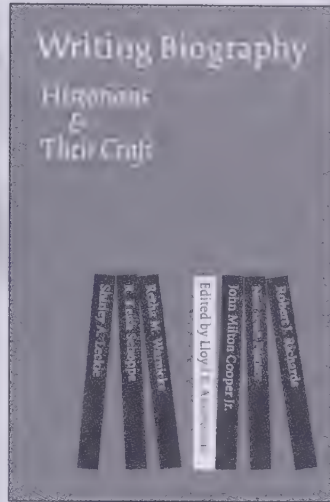
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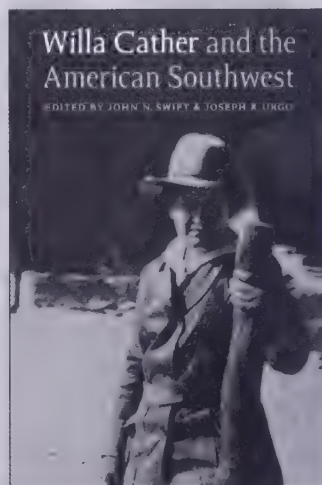
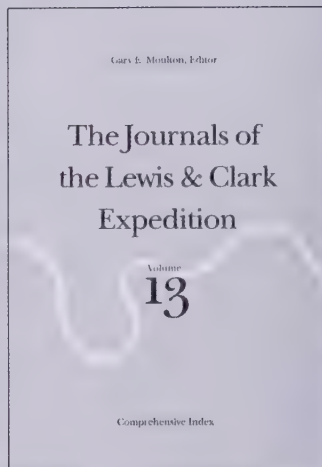
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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2004

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# THE NEW NEGRO ARTS AND LETTERS MOVEMENT AMONG BLACK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE MIDWEST, 1914-1940

RICHARD M. BREAUX

The 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s were an exciting time for black artists and writers in the United States. Much of the historical literature highlights the so-called Harlem Renaissance or its successor, the Black Chicago Renaissance. Few studies, however, document the influence of these artistic movements outside major urban cities such as New York, Chicago, or Washington, DC. In his 1988 essay on black education, historian Ronald Butchart argued that the educational effects of black social movements such as the Harlem Renaissance on black schooling are unclear

KEY WORDS: African American college students, Aaron Douglas, education, Harlem Renaissance, Midwest, New Negro Movement

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and underexplored.<sup>1</sup> This article explores the influence of the New Negro arts and letters movement on black students at four midwestern state universities from 1914 to 1940.

Black students on white midwestern campuses like the University of Kansas (KU), University of Iowa (UI), University of Nebraska (UNL), and University of Minnesota (UMN) aligned themselves with various New Negro philosophies that marked the onset of the New Negro arts and letters movement, or the Harlem Renaissance. The New Negro arts and letters movement had a profound influence on black college students. Black students expressed a New Negro consciousness in at least two ways: (1) they indirectly engaged in the discourses that surrounded the New Negro movement through black scholarly and popular publications, and (2) they engaged in racial vindication through classroom assignments, research, and other intellectual products that challenged prevailing myths of blacks' intellectual and cultural inferiority to whites. Interestingly, black students at KU, UI, UNL, and UMN seemed less interested in who financed the arts movement than in casting their creative works into the growing sea of black



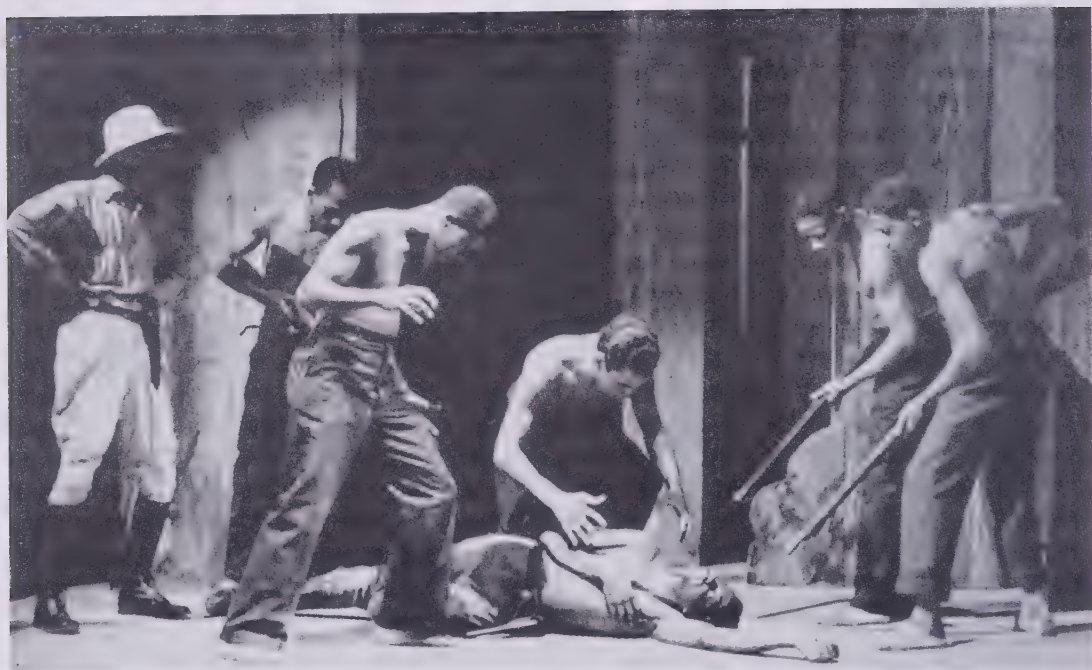


FIG. 1. Black University of Kansas students perform "The Emperor Jones" in October 1939. Reproduced by permission of the publisher from Robert Taft, *The Years on Mount Oread: A revision and extension of Across the Years on Mount Oread* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1955), 155.

literature and art. Newspapers such as the *Topeka Plaindealer*, the *Iowa Bystander*, and the *Omaha Monitor*, along with *Opportunity* and *Crisis* magazines, artistically and politically inspired black students at KU, UMN, UI, and UNL to behave, dress, and research issues relevant to black people like never before. National black fraternity and sorority publications such as Alpha Kappa Alpha's *Ivy Leaf* provided young people the opportunity to publish their creative works. Literary scholars and historians largely ignore such publications, yet these sources offer a different view of the work produced by those associated with various New Negro arts and letters movements outside Harlem. In fact, black students and alumni did not simply follow the lead of black performing and visual artists in Harlem. These students created their own movement replete with its own poetry, music, and means of expression. Black students from all four univer-

sities left their distinct mark on the New Negro arts and letters movement.

As scores of black men returned from World War I, they and many other blacks began to articulate a new militancy. If whites in the United States thought that they would continue to ignore blacks' political, social, cultural, and economic concerns and contributions, they were wrong. An editorial in the *Messenger*, a black socialist magazine, said it best when it announced, "As among other peoples, the New Crowd [Negro] must be composed of young men who are educated, radical, and fearless. . . . The New Crowd would have no armistice with lynch law; no truce with Jim-Crowism, and disfranchisement; no peace until the Negro receives his complete social, economic, and political justice."<sup>2</sup> This and other New Negro philosophies permeated the minds of black students at UI, UMN, KU, UNL, and other universities. To a small degree, the very pres-

ence of these black students on predominantly white college and university campuses signaled their endorsement of one of the basic tenets of New Negroism—to demonstrate, consciously or unconsciously, that they were whites' intellectual equals.

When Alain Locke's anthology, *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, appeared in 1925, those blacks who subscribed to the black intelligentsia's New Negro philosophies finally had their printed manifesto. Of course, in earlier decades Booker T. Washington, William Pickens, and a growing number of Black Nationalist and black socialist magazines had used the term "New Negro," but this term took on new meaning for blacks during and after World War I. "In the last decade," opened Locke's essay in the first section, "something beyond the watch and guard of statistics has happened in the life of the American Negro."<sup>3</sup> Locke asserted that the "Old Negro" and the so-called Negro problem had largely been a charge of the "sociologist, philanthropist, and race leader." Indeed, the Old Negro was a myth, "a creature of moral debate, historical controversy" and a perpetuation of historical fiction.<sup>4</sup> "The day of 'aunties,' 'uncles,' and 'mammies'" was gone, and now many blacks demanded self-respect, self-dependence, self-expression, and self-determination.<sup>5</sup> The major point stressed by this collection of essays was that black contributions to fiction, poetry, history, philosophy, and the dramatic, performing, and visual arts had existed for centuries. The migration of southern blacks to the urban North just made such contributions more evident.

Despite numerous literary and historical studies on the Harlem Renaissance, scholars continue to disagree about the precise beginning and end of this historical period. The period that spanned from World War I to the Great Depression marks the Harlem Renaissance for Nathan I. Huggins. Historians David Levering Lewis and Bruce Kellner, on the other hand, mark the return of the 369th Infantry Regiment in 1919 as the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance and the year 1934 as the year when the New Negro arts and letters

movement came to a "sputtering end." Still others, such as Cheryl Wall, argue for a more generously broad periodization, especially if historians take into account the works of Harlem Renaissance women.<sup>6</sup> A recent addition to the literature, an examination of the NAACP in the 1920s, seeks to completely reconceptualize the New Negro movement as the civil rights movement of the Jazz Age, ranging roughly from 1919 to 1930. While such a classification is a bit of a stretch, it does capture the idea that blacks have continually sought to live on their own social, political, religious, economic, and artistic terms. Harlem may have very well been the "Cultural Capital" for a number of black ethnic groups, but historian Mark R. Schneider reminds us that "to understand African Americans in the 1920s, we must get off the A train to Harlem and head out of Manhattan to points west and south."<sup>7</sup>

For historians who conceptualize the New Negro arts and letters movement by the creative arts and literature produced at the time, or the move of many black intellectuals or working people to the political left, the Chicago arts and letters movement deserves as much attention as Harlem's literary and political explosion. By 1935 Chicago emerged as a black cultural hub in its own right. Although Harlem receives, and has received, the majority of historians' attention, some scholars have also suggested that Chicago became just as important in producing black writers, artists, sociologists, dancers, and Marxists.<sup>8</sup> While these scholars may agree to disagree about the extent to which the Chicago black arts and letters movement was a continuation of the arts and letters movement in Harlem, at least two points are not debatable: (1) the Chicago arts and letters movement, of which a few UI alumni were a part, lasted at least into the 1940s; and (2) most of Chicago's black artists engaged in dialog with those black artists associated with Harlem.

The history of the New Negro arts and letters movement, like the history of black education in the United States, presses scholars

to think about white philanthropy and the black arts. While scholars like Nathan I. Huggins and Harold Cruse believed the New Negro movement was a showpiece for white bohemians thirsty for a taste of the nativistic and exotic, others like David Levering Lewis, Ann Douglas, and Thomas Bender see the New Negro arts and letters movement as a constant struggle between two groups of cultural power brokers—white philanthropists and black artists.<sup>9</sup> In higher education, similar struggles emerged as to what disciplines black students would study, especially in advanced degree programs. Rising accreditation standards in white and black colleges alike precipitated the need for faculty with more specialized, intensive, and advanced training. With the absence of graduate programs on most predominantly black college campuses, and the color line drawn at predominantly white southern colleges, some black college faculty, with assistance from the General Education Board, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Rosenwald Fund, took courses and graduate degrees at northern white colleges.<sup>10</sup> Just as northern white philanthropists sought to control the direction of southern black education, a smaller number of white philanthropists developed a similar interest in having some say in the direction of intellectual discourses among an emerging black intelligentsia on northern college campuses.

White philanthropic interest in black intellectual discourse did not begin in the 1920s; this interest went back, at least, to the early Jim Crow era. Indeed, Lois Harlan's two-volume biography of Booker T. Washington demonstrates that in the early twentieth century, a number of white and black power brokers fought for control over black newspapers and political organizations. Blacks who challenged Washington's philosophies found themselves targets of the infamous "Tuskegee Machine." Washington forced some black newspapers that criticized him to shut down, and he arranged for several black critics of Tuskegee to lose their jobs.<sup>11</sup> White philanthropic interest in black political opinions and scholarship

continued after Washington's death in 1915. Historians August Meier and Elliott Rudwick contend that although white philanthropists showed moderate interest in Carter G. Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* few philanthropists gave generous contributions to studies of black life or black intellectual institutions that were primarily administered or controlled by black scholars and artists before 1922.<sup>12</sup>

Despite their early philanthropic work among black schools and black teachers, white philanthropists did not establish formal scholarship programs for advanced study among black until the 1920s. The two most powerful and wealthy philanthropic groups that campaigned to develop black teachers, black intellectuals, and leadership were the GEB Fellowship and the Rosenwald Fellowship Fund in 1924 and 1928, respectively.<sup>13</sup> Both funds gave money for promising black instructors at southern black schools and resources for their instructors to earn credentials and maintain their jobs. They were also inspired by the intellectual and creative direction of the New Negro arts and letters movement, and gave money to a number of creative artists. Between 1922 and 1933 the GEB Fellowship focused almost exclusively on the black teacher shortage, and the Rockefeller Foundation endorsed black students in the medical and health industries. By 1940 GEB Fellowship funds went exclusively to whites and blacks who planned to teach in southern schools. The Rosenwald Fund supported black students in at least four major areas: (1) medicine and nursing; (2) library science and teacher education; (3) unusually promising blacks who would study at northern white or European colleges; and (4) vocational and industrial teachers.<sup>14</sup> All had to send informal requests to the Rosenwald Fund Committee and those who would teach in southern black schools and college were particularly encouraged. Despite the undeniable influence of the GEB Fellowship and Rosenwald Fund on black education, only a handful of black students at KU, UI, UNL, and UMN received funds from



these organizations. According to the Rosenwald Fund database at Fisk University, a total of eight students who received Rosenwald Fellowships for advanced study between 1928 and 1936 earned master of science, master of arts, or master of music degrees from UMN (3), UI (3), KU (1), or UNL (1).<sup>15</sup> Some students obviously had changes in their plans because a total of twelve black students chose UMN (9) or UI (3) to complete their advanced study with Rosenwald Fellowship funds. No students requested funds to attend KU or UNL with Rosenwald money.<sup>16</sup> Between 1936 and 1941 only two Rosenwald fellows attended UMN, although not one of these students intended to enroll at UMN, UI, UNL, or KU.

Those who received Rosenwald and Rockefeller fellowships were an assorted lot. For example, KU alumnus Sterling V. Owens used a Rosenwald Fellowship to study social work in New York, but ended up taking a job as executive secretary of the St. Paul Urban League.<sup>17</sup> Owens also lectured at UMN in the 1930s. Similarly, two Georgia State College teachers, Annie Dixon and Clarence Ross, used Rosenwald Fellowship money to study at UMN in the 1930s, but neither earned a degree. Maurice Thomasson used a Rosenwald Fellowship to earn a master's degree in education at UMN so he could become an instructor at Johnson C. Smith College. Ollie Lee Brown turned her money from the Rosenwald Fellowship into a bachelor's degree in library science from UI in 1931. Others, like Elmer E. Collins, received both GEB and Rosenwald Fellowship funds; Collins successfully earned a doctor of medicine degree from UI in 1933 and later taught at Howard University. Vernon A. Wilkerson, who earned a BA at KU, an MD at UI, and a PhD at UMN, completed his studies with GEB funds, as did one of black America's first women history PhDs, Lulu Merle Johnson, at UI. Johnson later taught at several black colleges including Cheney State University.<sup>18</sup> Charles W. Buggs, who earned his MS and PhD from UMN, found a job at Dillard University and later Wayne State University.<sup>19</sup> Finally, UNL graduate Aaron



FIG. 2. Aaron Douglas at the University of Nebraska before he became the signature artist of the Harlem Renaissance. Photo from *Cornhusker Yearbook* (1922), 46. Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.

Douglas and UI graduate Margaret Walker used Rosenwald Fellowship funds to further their creative works well after they graduated from these institutions. Walker taught at Jackson State University and Douglas taught art at Fisk University. Despite the achievements of these dozen or so recipients, the GEB and the Rosenwald Fellowship Fund's staff had its greatest influence on southern black colleges and blacks who conducted advanced study at the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Hampton Institute, and the larger, more heavily endowed black and white universities.<sup>20</sup>

The Harmon Foundation, like most white philanthropic organizations that gave money to blacks, was not without its critics. While some scholars praise the Harmon Foundation for its role in disseminating black art, others,

like Mary Ann Calo, criticize it for divorcing black art from its political context, making black art "sociological, rather than aesthetic" and "constricting the critical frame" in which audiences viewed black art. Much of the foundation's writing about black art, argues Calo, "was simply Harmon Foundation publicity posing as art criticism."<sup>21</sup>

A New Negro consciousness swept across midwestern college campuses just as it took Harlem by storm. Black students, black alumni, and politically active blacks in Iowa City, the Twin Cities, Lawrence, and Lincoln launched a number of antidiscrimination campaigns in their respective cities. They simultaneously challenged institutional racism in a number of academic disciplines on midwestern college campuses and created an extensive set of intellectual opportunities for themselves.

Outside the classroom, most black students, and a small group of left-thinking white students, embraced the writings of New Negro arts giants such as Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and Langston Hughes. Members of the *Dove*, a socialist newspaper at KU, seemed particularly interested in poems such as Countee Cullen's "Yet Do I Marvel" because it symbolized black people's seemingly futile struggle for equality.<sup>22</sup> Such poems drew upon the tragic Greek stories of both Tantalus and Sisyphus, mythic trickster figures who suffered in Hades for varying reasons and could never quite escape their predicament.

Black students at KU found the works of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay engaging. Blacks at KU, UI, and UMN not only immersed themselves in Langston Hughes's verses, but in 1932 invited the New Negro movement's poet laureate back home to the Midwest to speak to college students, black and white. At UI, Hughes played to a packed house in the liberal arts auditorium. He read from *Weary Blues*, his first published book of poetry, and read selections such as "When Sue Wears Red" and "Negro Dancers." He also read his poem "Dressed Up" and reportedly interspersed his poems with reflections of his life experiences. Hughes had graciously accepted

the invitation sent under the auspices of the Graduate College to come to UI. Professor Frank L. Mott, a journalism professor who had previously organized a night of black poetry readings, introduced Hughes to the crowd. After Hughes's program he was off to the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity house where he rested after his lecture.<sup>23</sup> According to one report, Hughes chatted, joked, and played a few hands of cards with students.<sup>24</sup> One week after his appearance at UI, Hughes returned to his childhood home in Lawrence. Hughes's mother, Carrie Langston, attended KU in the late nineteenth century, and Langston Hughes lived with his grandmother in Lawrence through the early 1910s. Hughes's lecture in Lawrence was sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, which delighted in its ability to bring the Midwest kid turned Harlemit to campus in the midst of a depression.<sup>25</sup> The visit marked the first of three times Hughes returned to Lawrence to speak at KU after he left the city in 1915.<sup>26</sup> In 1935 Hughes made a trip to the upper Midwest and spoke to a crowd of 4,000 students at UMN's Northrop Auditorium. According to historian and Hughes biographer Arnold Rampersad, Hughes spoke on the topic of interracial socialism. Hughes argued that "the basic economic problem of the Negro is the same as that of his white compatriots, and it is through the labor movements that some sort of solution must be reached." Hughes made complimentary visits to several classes and a meeting of UMN students.<sup>27</sup> He also made a special visit to an off-campus site where at least five students formed a committee to petition UMN officials to defy Tulane University's request to withdraw a black UMN football player from their upcoming match.<sup>28</sup>

During their respective visits to the Twin Cities and UMN, Langston Hughes, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Charles S. Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, and a host of other blacks associated with Locke's *New Negro* anthology made their way to the UMN and Minneapolis's black Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>29</sup>

Often these visitors attended special parties and gave talks or performances for people who used the settlement house's services. The black tenor Roland Hayes played to a packed group on UMN's campus in 1926 and 1929. In his first concert Hayes reportedly "scored his usual triumph" and in his second visit to UMN, students filled the newly completed Northrop Memorial Auditorium to hear Hayes give his performance of European classics and black spirituals.<sup>30</sup> When Paul Robeson performed in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1927, students traveled from KU to hear the performance. Robeson also performed for white and black students at UMN in 1930.<sup>31</sup> The following year, black women students at UMN invited Fisk University's Charles S. Johnson to campus to speak on the "Contribution of Negroes to American Civilization." Closer to the end of the decade, and just three years before the infamous Constitution Hall incident, contralto Marian Anderson performed at UMN much to the delight of the Eta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha. Anderson also performed at KU's Hoch Auditorium in January 1938.<sup>32</sup>

While the songs of New Negro musicians and the poetry of Harlem's literati became a point of pride among black college students, these students threw their own hats into the literary ring. Some UNL, UI, UMN, and KU students and alumni began to plant the seeds of the New Negro arts and letters movement as early as 1911. William N. Johnson, a former student and football player at UNL, wrote several poems and short stories for the *Crisis* including a story titled "The Coward," which relayed the tale of Horton, a black plowman who reflects on his family's history as slaves and tenant farmers, and yet refuses to strike back at an abusive landlord:

Back in the dark night of his memory  
there was only the somber race of plow-  
men. He seemed to see them, all prototypes  
of himself, in a single file, plowing the same  
furrow. The end—the wearying end of the  
long curving row—was a black chasm. This  
was his race, the Hortons. They had borne

chains with no whining; their great broad  
backs had been lacerated there at the whip-  
ping post by the biting lash, yet they never  
struck back!

"Damn you, nigger."

It was the landlord's rasping voice that  
startled the dreaming plowman. A frail blue-  
white fist stung his twitching black face.  
There was pause, and in that pause, the  
thrush still chanted its anthems to Heaven;  
Horton the plowman, shrank away from the  
face of his master. The sweet breeze cooled  
his hot brow.<sup>33</sup>

Although Johnson's main character did not  
express characteristics of a New Negro con-  
sciousness, Johnson's venture into poetry and  
short-story writing did.

While a number of historians note that  
black men often dominate discussions and  
examinations of a New Negro consciousness  
expressed through the arts, black women stu-  
dents, particularly at UMN and UNL, turned  
out a number of poems, songs, short stories,  
and plays of their own. In the 1920s UMN  
graduate student Ruth Pearson studied black  
folklore while she taught in the sociology de-  
partment.<sup>34</sup> Zanyze H. Hill received her  
bachelor's degree from UNL and became the  
school's first black women law school gradu-  
ate in 1929. One year before she earned her  
law degree, Hill wrote a coming of age poem  
in AKA's *Ivy Leaf*, titled "My Nantie":

My Nantie she's the funniest thing  
She looks real hard when I help her sing  
When company comes, and I run out,  
To see what they're all laughing 'bout.  
She just says, you go right back  
And don't be peeping through the crack  
Company they say, Oh that's all right  
She's only just a little might  
And some day when she grows up tall  
Then you'll be wishing she small  
Then company says Nantie, listen dear  
Why does Mollie act so queer?  
Nantie looks around to see if I'm listening  
And if I'm not she began hissing





FIG. 3. Zanyze Hill, Poet and first African American woman to receive a law degree from the University of Nebraska. Photo from *Cornhusker Yearbook* (1929), 49. Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.

And says, what else could she be  
The way Mrs. Jones acted at her tea  
Why I think it was terrible, don't you  
The way they whispered, just those two  
And company asks Nantie what was it  
And Nantie said why it was the rite  
Her curtains once were white as snow  
But she decided to make a show  
And when she went down to the ten-cent  
store

'Cause she couldn't afford any more  
And bought herself some dye of red  
To match she said her bedroom spread  
I listened hard but couldn't hear any more  
'Cause just then my Nantie she shut the  
door

When I get old and have little girls  
And company comes to my house  
I'll never tell them to go and sit  
And be quiet as a little mouse.<sup>35</sup>

Zanyze Hill also published another poem in the same *Ivy Leaf*, titled "At Dawning."<sup>36</sup> Ruth Shores Hill, also a student at UNL, wrote a poem that blended her creative spirit with a solicitation to get more literary contributions to AKA's *Ivy Leaf*.<sup>37</sup>

Amateur music impresario Florence Webster at KU wrote a poem that many would not classify as representative of the New Negro arts and letters movement; yet a few scholars like Houston Baker and Jon Michael Spencer might argue that Webster evoked one of the era's most misunderstood tropes—the "mastery of form":

A symphony in note was mine  
With cellos, flutes and violins  
Tuned in accord to suit the tastes  
Of critics and without amends  
The concord must be rarely bent  
To please the ears of thousands  
The Melodies are subtle strains  
For moments soothing hungry souls  
Appeasing crowds, frustrated mind  
But unremembered in a time.  
A symphony in words was yours  
Played on the strings of hearts—just two  
Tuned in accord to mark the time  
Of lovers just for me for you  
The harmonies are heaven-sent  
Oblivious to the thousands  
The melody is your dear voice  
Accompanied by tender sighs  
Crescendos are but raptures taut  
To never, never be forgot  
Oh! Years will pass as must they do  
But this has been my happiness  
Your symphony, I think, is best  
But God has heard my song for you.<sup>38</sup>

Although these students' poems may not have reflected the more sophisticated style of those poets historians typically associate with the New Negro arts and letters movement, the poems by black women students share some of the themes and styles adopted by New Negro arts and letters movement women writers. Historian Cheryl Wall argues that the cultural

milieu of the time forced black women to suppress their gender and privilege their race; nevertheless, black women poets were not only less race conscious, but also less innovative in form when compared to black male writers of the time. This meant the black women poets rarely experimented with black vernacular, or cultural expressions such as jazz, blues, or spirituals.<sup>39</sup> This was certainly the case for black women student writers at KU and UNL. By 1940, however, Margaret Walker, whom Langston Hughes advised to attend a northern college, used literary forms and themes not typically associated with women in the New Negro arts and letters movement to write her poetry. Inspired by Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden, Arna Bontemps, and the emerging young writer Richard Wright, Walker drew on the political environment of the 1930s (the depression, labor struggles, and a literary left) to transform black women's poetry. Two verses from one of the poems that comprised her UI master's thesis spoke to the irony that many blacks felt when they experienced institutional and environmental racism despite their education.<sup>40</sup> The poems in Walker's master's thesis speak to a folk tradition that only a few black students at UI, UMN, KU, and UNL had an opportunity to study formally.

While a student at UI, Walker recalled that she skipped an entire week of classes to read, and reread, the brand new novel that some scholars argue represented the last rites for the New Negro arts and letters movement—Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Walker recalled that she was in Iowa when she saw a copy of *Native Son* early in February 1940. Walker remembered that the shock of the book "rocked me on my heels." Walker had developed at least an intellectually passionate friendship with Wright. Before she came to UI, Walker had sent Wright clippings from the Rob Nixon case, which Wright used as a prototype for Bigger Thomas's trial in the novel.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to creative writing and poetry, black students developed an interest in the dramatic arts and play writing. Although most of the plays that students performed were those

written by white Negrotarians whose names became attached with Harlem or the New Negro arts and letters movement, a few black students wrote and directed small productions of their own. Eugene O'Neil's *The Emperor Jones*, Marc Connelly's *Green Pastures*, and DuBose and Dorothy Heywood's *Porgy* became favorites among black students on white campuses. In 1929 a member of AKA's Ivy Leaf Club at UNL appeared with other black members of the University Players in a staged production of *The Emperor Jones*. One year later, an all-black cast of students at KU presented Octavius Roy Cohen's *Come Seven*. In October 1939 several black students and some white students at KU opened the Speech and Dramatic Arts Department's season double feature with *The Emperor Jones*. Actor and political activist Paul Robeson had made *The Emperor Jones* a hit in the screen adaptation of the play. At KU, the reporter for the *Daily Kansan* appeared much more impressed with black students' acting ability than with the total production: "Last night's reenactment revealed that there is lots of dramatic talent among the negro students of the Campus," wrote the reviewer, "that their peculiar gifts are adaptable to such a theatrical carriage. . . . But, 'My Heart's in the Highlands' was the high spot of the evening's entertainment. It seemed to achieve fully what 'The Emperor Jones' attempted—a strikingly new method of dramatic expression."<sup>42</sup> KU historian Robert Taft immortalized the cast of *The Emperor Jones* in his book *Across the Years on Mount Oread*.<sup>43</sup> Many of these students maintained the Paul Robeson Dramatic Club at KU, which twenty-three black students established in 1931.<sup>44</sup>

If local blacks and black and white students in Lincoln and Lawrence applauded the student production of *The Emperor Jones*, blacks in Lincoln and the Twin Cities launched full-scale campaigns to shut down proposed productions of *Porgy* at the universities of UNL and UMN. First published as a novel in 1925, and later developed as a play and musical, which attracted scores of whites and some blacks to the theater, *Porgy* is the story of a

crippled black beggar who witnesses a murder during a dice game and becomes enamored with the murderer's woman friend. When Crown, the murderer, returns to claim Bess, Porgy kills Bess's ex-lover and escapes conviction because no one can believe a man in Porgy's condition could kill the brutish Crown. Porgy returns to Catfish Row only to discover that Bess becomes strung out on "happy dust" and gets "turned out" into a life as a New York City prostitute.

For some blacks, particularly those outside the arts and among the black middle class, *Porgy* glorified the worst in black folk and urban street culture. Langston Hughes, a champion of creative license and artistic freedom, praised the theater adaptation of *Porgy*, but some black actors and celebrities later lambasted the play. In Lincoln, local black ministers organized against the production sponsored by the University Dramatic Club. Ministers claimed, "The play was a deliberate attempt to feature the race at its worst."<sup>45</sup> If the play continued on as scheduled, they charged, it would intimidate blacks in Lincoln and at UNL, and it would damage the growing spirit of interracial cooperation in the city. Representatives of the drama department refuted the ministers' claims. They maintained that the play was "art with no thought of reflecting on the group," the cast was almost entirely made up of black students, and the suppression of the play would represent an attempt to squash students' artistic expression.<sup>46</sup>

Debates surrounding the production of *Porgy* became much more heated at UMN. The university's theater department argued in favor of the all-black student production of life in South Carolina's "Catfish Row," but the UMN's Council of Negro Students opposed the production. Caught in the middle, and leaning heavily toward the argument for creative license and free artistic expression, the thirty or so black students hoped the production would proceed. Anne Fenalson, a white associate professor of sociology and advisor to the Council of Negro Students, asserted that fifty members who objected to the

play that Dr. C. Lowell Lee of the theater department would concede to council demands to replace *Porgy* with a more suitable production. However, divisions emerged within the council. A second vote of forty-six against the play, six for the play, and twelve who abstained, later gave way to an eighteen-to-sixteen vote to get rid of the play. When theater department officials found no suitable replacement and continued to prepare for the play's opening, the St. Paul and Minneapolis branches of the NAACP and Urban League stepped in to support the Council of Negro Students' slim majority. Spearheaded by the St. Paul NAACP, the group issued a statement that argued that because black students had opposed the production after three votes, "the members of the St. Paul Branch of the NAACP strongly oppose the presentation of this play."<sup>47</sup> This joint committee also threatened to take the matter up before the UMN president Guy S. Ford and the Board of Regents if the theater department ignored its request.

In addition to staging performances of popular plays with their assortment of black characters, black students, particularly black women, at UNL and KU wrote and directed their own mini-dramas. Ruth Shores Hill wrote *The Glorious Adventure*, a four-scene romantic comedy about black college students who fall in love after discovering their mutual interest in an assigned course reading.<sup>48</sup> Ruth Gillum at KU wrote a musical aptly named *Heading for Harlem*, performed before "an enthusiastic and appreciative audience."<sup>49</sup> The production and performance of these and other plays demonstrate the degree to which the cultural movement so often associated with Harlem, and on occasion Chicago, spread even farther west.

In the truest spirit of black creativity, white philanthropy, and the New Negro arts and letters movement, several black students won awards and wide recognition for their creative academic work. Clifton Lamb, the director of the Prairie View State College drama department, who studied at UI in the summers to receive a master's degree and maintain his job,



won a \$100 first prize and a publishing contract with the Dramatic Publishing Company for his play *God's Great Acres*. One contest judge remarked that the play, a story of the influence of industrialization on sharecroppers in western Texas, was "a powerful and sympathetic treatment of a phase of the sharecropper problem that has not yet been fully exploited."<sup>50</sup> Beulah Wheeler at UI, Earl Wilkins at UMN, and Charles Stokes at KU won first place in speech contests on their respective campuses in 1921, 1925, and 1927. Wheeler's speech was titled "Uniform Marriage and Divorce Law," Wilkins's topic was "John Doe, Colored Student," and Stokes spoke on "The New Negro."<sup>51</sup> When artist Elizabeth Catlett created the statue *Mother and Child* for her UI master's project, she walked away with UI's first MFA and a first prize at the American Negro Exhibition in Chicago. Catlett recalled that it was UI professor Grant Wood, not New Negro patriarch Alain Locke, who encouraged her to take on black women as an artistic subject.<sup>52</sup> Budding writer Margaret Walker, who incidentally was Catlett's UI roommate, earned a master of arts in writing from UI. Her master's thesis, a collection of folk ballads titled *For My People*, earned her the coveted Yale University Series of Younger Poets award. This published thesis became one of the first books of poetry published by a black woman since New Negro arts poet Georgia Douglas Johnson published her work nearly a decade earlier. Nick Aaron Ford, who came to UI to study for a master of arts in literature while on leave from his teaching post, published his recently completed master's thesis as *The Contemporary Negro Novel: A Study in Race Relations*. Zatella Turner, who received bachelor's and master's degrees from KU, published *My Wonderful Year*, a memoir of her time at the University of London, where she studied drama with the assistance of an AKA fellowship.<sup>53</sup> The New Negro arts movement's signature artist, Aaron Douglas, emerged as an outstanding student while enrolled at UNL from 1917 to 1922. The "fair-haired boy" of the arts department took his

BFA and won first prize in a student show.<sup>54</sup> In 1936, fourteen years after Aaron Douglas graduated from UNL with a degree in fine art, the Nebraska Fine Arts Council honored the artist through the acquisition of his painting *Window Cleaning*, which remains a part of UNL permanent art collection.<sup>55</sup>

Various black intellectuals—who were proponents of the New Negro philosophies significantly influenced visual artists such as Aaron Douglass and Elizabeth Catlett and literary artist Margaret Walker. Douglas and Catlett gained recognition beyond their wildest dreams, and KU and UI also gave birth to other black visual artists influenced by the New Negro arts and letters movement. Tony Hill, K. Roderick O'Neal, and Bernard Goss represent only three examples of those who never became as prominent as Douglas and Catlett and yet received the attention of people like Alain Locke. They helped to develop several more widely known black visual artists. Tony Hill, who graduated with a sociology degree from KU in 1928 and a master's in social work from the University of Chicago, became an internationally known sculptor and ceramics artist. After he honed his skills at the University of Southern California, he enjoyed a celebrated career.<sup>56</sup> K. Roderick O'Neal received his bachelor of arts degree in graphic arts in 1931 and another degree from UI in 1933. As a student, he had exhibitions in the Iowa Memorial Union, and he later developed into one of Illinois's most celebrated architects.<sup>57</sup> Bernard Goss, who came to UI from Sedalia, Missouri, also exhibited work during his time as a student. Goss's star rose quickly, and *Opportunity* printed a story about Goss, his work, and other newly arrived black Chicago artists, just five years after his 1935 graduation from UI. While in Chicago, Goss enrolled in the Art Institute, married another aspiring artist, Margaret Taylor, and, with her, developed the South Side Community Arts Center and later founded the DuSable Museum of Black History. Goss's 1939 painting *Musicians*, appeared in Alain Locke's *The Negro in Art*.<sup>58</sup>

Some historians often admittedly overlook music's influence on the New Negro arts and letters movement. Historian Arnold Rampersad writes in a foreword to a new edition of Alain Locke's influential work, *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*, that if he were writing the book again, he would have paid much more attention to the role of music, especially blues and jazz, in the New Negro arts and letters movement. New Negro arts patriarch Alain Locke, Rampersad argues, wholly excluded any mention of the blues, and the editor treated jazz like a wayward stepchild.<sup>59</sup> Locke and West-Indian-born popular historian Joel A. Rogers certainly believed that black spirituals, as they related to black folk traditions, as well as jazz, symbolized the spirit of New Negroism.<sup>60</sup> Students and community people usually did not formally engage in jazz, blues, or folk discourses in the classroom, but at dancehalls and house parties one would be hard pressed to hear anything but jazz coming from the phonograph. KU alumnus Nicholas Gerran recalled that although he and other black students did not study jazz formally in the classroom or music departments, this certainly does not mean that black students did not listen to or play jazz outside the classroom. Among many middle-class blacks, "a jazz musician," recalled KU alumnus Nicholas Gerran, "wasn't recognized as an honorable profession." Gerran later joined black KU classmate Florence Webster at the Moscow Conservatory of Music in the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup>

The connection between classically trained black musicians and the Soviet Union has largely been ignored in Harlem Renaissance and black music history. While several scholars note that Roland Hayes and Paul Robeson performed in Moscow, and Alain Locke praised the Soviet Union for its policy toward ethnic minority artistic development, few have explored the depth to which Russian and black folk music, or Soviet classical and black classical music traditions, influenced each other. All these artists, including the young student Nicholas Gerran, took note of the lack of prejudice they experienced in the Soviet Union,

but the question that remains, although outside the scope of this study, is how did these experiences influence black musicians' view of Communism? Did the Stalinist-Hitler pact alter their view of Communism? Outside of Paul Robeson, we know very little about how the Soviet Union, Communism, or the Moscow Conservatory shaped black musicians' political philosophies.<sup>62</sup>

The sheer number of black students, particularly black women, who seemed to have some classical music training may seem phenomenal now, but such was a typical gender-appropriate undertaking during the first decades of the twentieth century. As early as 1908, several black women and men who were enrolled in KU's music department performed vocal, violin, and piano solos at musicals held at St. Luke AME church. KU students like Doris R. Novel, Etta G. Moten, Ruth Gillum, Maxine Bruce, and Lillian Webster continued this tradition well into the 1930s.<sup>63</sup> Cleopatra Ross, a fine arts student at UNL, played the piano, the pipe organ, and sang at a number of recitals and black student programs held at Quinn Chapel AME and First Christian churches.<sup>64</sup> Three years later, members of APHIA at UNL, with help from AKA, sponsored a similar recital at Quinn Chapel.<sup>65</sup> KU graduate Etta G. Moten took her guitar, piano, and singing talents to the national concert stage, screen, radio, and equally shared it with chapters of AKA throughout the country.<sup>66</sup>

For many scholars today, classically trained black musicians who perfected European musical traditions do not merit a place among those who embraced any form of New Negroism. Black intellectuals young and old debated the issue of what types of plays, poetry, literature, and music should represent black people. Literati writers Claude McKay and Langston Hughes appreciated black performances of more mainstream and classical troupes affiliated with the white middle class as long as they rightfully shared a place with black spirituals, jazz, and blues. Still, few historians of the New Negro arts and letters movement share McKay's and Hughes's opinion.

Music historians Jon Michael Spencer and Paul Allen Anderson argue that black classical musicians and jazz and blues musicians engaged in what literary scholar Houston Baker calls the "mastery of form" and the "deformation of mastery."<sup>67</sup> Baker, and Spencer building on Baker's thesis, suggests that both the "mastery of form" and the "deformation of mastery" were attempts to usurp racism. The "mastery of form" required that blacks, particularly black students, perfect Anglo-Saxon, upper-class white American and European "high culture" in an effort to force white people to see black people's humanity and respect blacks as equals. Within the area of education, "mastery of form" translated into mastering the "form of 'standard' educational process in the West."<sup>68</sup> Yet some blacks, even college students, engaged in a "deformation of mastery," a conscious effort to deconstruct mainstream culture, literature, and music through a black rural folk and black urban cultural lens. To be sure, Baker maintains that deformation is "a go(ue)rilla action in the face of acknowledged adversaries." Moreover, deformation "distinguishes rather than conceals. It secures territorial advantage and heightens a group's survival possibilities."<sup>69</sup> On rare occasions, students like George O. Caldwell managed to incorporate black folk music into his thesis at UI when he compared traditional black folk songs to Russian composer Igor Stravinsky's 1910 ballet *Firebird*.<sup>70</sup>

A small number of sources offer a view of black student life that demonstrates that all students were not trying to put up a middle-class front. In their leisure time, students demonstrated an affinity for the blues and blues musicians, who were constantly in the act of deforming mainstream culture. To be sure, black students at UNL, who were by many accounts more working class than their contemporaries at KU, UI, and UMN, listened to and performed songs like the "St. James Infirmary Blues," "Just a Gigolo," "Baby Won't You Please Come Home," and "He May Be Your Man But He Comes to See Me Sometimes."<sup>71</sup>

The spirit and sociopolitical consciousness that surrounded the New Negro arts and let-

ters movement in Harlem and the black arts and letters movement in Chicago emerged as an enormous influence in the intellectual lives of black KU, UMN, UNL, and UI students and alumni. The examples of students' creative work, however, demonstrate that students also produced their own poetry, fiction, and visual arts, and by extension their own arts movement. Despite historical debates about who should and should not be termed New Negroes, sources from the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s reveal that blacks with a variety of talents and political views deserved the title New Negroes.

#### NOTES

1. Ronald Butchart, "Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World: A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 361. The standard work about the New Negro movement at historically black colleges and universities remains Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

2. A. Philip Randolph, "A New Crowd—A New Negro," *Messenger*, May-June 1919, 27.

3. Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, Inc. 1925), 3.

4. *Ibid.*, 3.

5. Cheryl Wall, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 2; Alain Locke, foreword to *New Negro*, ix; Locke "New Negro," 4, 5.

6. Nathan I. Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 3012; David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (1997; New York: Penguin Books, 1981), xxviii; Wall, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*, 10.

7. Mark Robert Schneider, "We Return Fighting": *The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 4.

8. James Edward Smethurst, *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5; Robert Bone, "Richard Wright and the Chicago Renaissance," *Callaloo* 28 (Summer 1986): 446-68; Joyce Russell-Robinson, "Renaissance Manqué: Black WPA Artists in Chicago," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 18, no. 1 (1994): 36-43; Craig Werner, "Leon Forrest, the AACM and the



Legacy of the Chicago Renaissance," *Black Scholar* 23, nos. 3-4 (1993): 10-23.

9. Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue*, xxiii; Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Noonday, 1996); Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: History of Intellectual Life in New York from 1750 to the Beginning of Our Time* (New York: Knopf, 1987).

10. Jayne R. Beilke, "To Render Better Service: The Role of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program for the Development of Graduate and Professional Educational Opportunities for African Americans" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1994); Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934; New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 364; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 275-77.

11. For more on the power and influence of the "Tuskegee Machine," see Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 254-71; Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 84-106.

12. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). For more on the roller-coaster ride to finance the JNH in the early years, and the role of Rosenwald, Carnegie, and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, see Darlene Clark Hine, "Carter G. Woodson: White Philanthropy and Negro Historiography," in *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Reconstruction of American History*, by Darlene Clark Hine (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 203-22.

13. Beilke, "To Render Better Service," 50.

14. *Ibid.*, 51-52, 61-63.

15. *Ibid.*, 157-59.

16. *Ibid.*, 159-60.

17. Earl Spangler, *The Negro in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: T.S. Denison and Co., 1961), 126.

18. Harry Washington Greene, *Holders of Doctorates among American Negroes* (Boston: Meador Publishing, 1946), 63, 136.

19. Beilke, "To Render Better Service," 68.

20. A much smaller, yet equally important white philanthropic fund to the New Negro arts and letter movement's proliferation was the William E. Harmon Foundation. The white Negrotarian and New York real estate magnate William E. Harmon acquired the resources, after several successful business ventures, to leave Iowa for New York. From his post in New York, William E. Harmon developed the Harmon Foundation, which, among other

things, sponsored traveling exhibits of black art and bestowed the Distinguished Award for Achievement Among Negroes prize. Archie Alexander, black UI alumnus and architect, received the Harmon Prize in 1927. "Archie Alexander Given the Harmon Award," *Omaha Monitor*, March 11, 1927.

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# ENTERING SACRED LANDSCAPES

## CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS VERSUS LEGAL REALITIES IN THE NORTHWESTERN PLAINS

GREGORY R. CAMPBELL AND THOMAS A. FOOR

The spiritual part of this earth is as powerful, maybe more powerful than the physical life that we have—that we understand. We have lived in the spiritual environment, and are very much aware of its powers. The certain power places that have certain gifts to man, such as the Covenants, the many Teachings, the many blessings that come from these places—these places we call the Holy Places. The Holy Places are the spiritual environment that we have come to understand, that here is a place that the teachings, the Covenants, are received.<sup>1</sup>

**KEY WORDS:** Cultural Resource Issues, Native American Religion, Sacred Lands.

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A Northern Cheyenne religious leader who eloquently described his intimate relationship with sacred places spoke these words. Sacred and cultural geography is a universal feature of indigenous religious practices across Native North America.<sup>2</sup> However, in a growing number of cases, conflicts have developed between Native North American religious practitioners and land-managing federal agencies. The contentious situations often come down to Indian peoples struggling to reassert their religious rights within an environment of “due process, federal and state statutes, and administrative policies.”<sup>3</sup> Here we take a case study, the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, and examine the problem of weighing a value system based on inextricably associating a spiritual world and physical geography against a system that inherently separates the two.



FIG. 1. View of Bighorn Medicine Wheel facing east. Outer ring, spokes and central cairn are visible.

To fully comprehend religious beliefs and practices associated with cultural landscapes, it is necessary to examine Native North American conceptions of the sacred.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional northwestern Plains religions, similar to other indigenous religions of Native North America, are cosmotheistic. Within such a worldview, humans, animals, plants, natural objects, and natural phenomena are animated by spiritual power. These animated beings are interrelated through kinship and reciprocal obligations. Through reciprocal kin relations, spirit beings interact with each other, including human beings. Those interactions involve the transfer of power, and they establish a dialogue that must be maintained by ritual prescriptions.<sup>5</sup>

These cosmotheistic principles extend themselves as an integral part of the landscape. For traditionalists there exists a complex web

of relationships, if not a unity, between ecology, humanity, and supernatural beings. Those relationships require sustained reciprocity and moral acknowledgment. Thus, spirit beings "are fully integrated into all aspects of social, cultural, and environmental activity."<sup>6</sup> A cosmotheistic view of the universe encompasses the entire landscape, including all the conceptual levels and elements of that ecological system.<sup>7</sup>

Within northwestern Plains religious ideologies, a basic frame of reference is sacred power. Traditional religions, as articulated and practiced, conceive of sacred power as a quality that pervades the universe and all the beings that inhabit the world. Ethnologist Clark Wissler captured this belief among the Blackfoot in his classic ethnographic description of ceremonial bundles. In "the Blackfoot theory . . . there functions in the universe a

force (*natoji* = sunpower) most manifest in the sun but pervading the entire world, a power (*natoji*) that may communicate with individuals, making itself manifest through any object, usually animate."<sup>8</sup>

That sacred power, among all northwestern Plains religious systems, is a force that gives life and movement to the universe and to the beings that inhabit it. Thus, a central expression of sacred power is animation. All things within the landscape that embody animation, defined by movement or speech, are living entities, imbued with power. Power, therefore, is necessary not only for life but for action.

In their creations and placements on the landscape, all beings are endowed with a specific sacred power. All animals and animated natural objects possess sacred power. Humans also can possess it through ceremony, ritual, prayer, and sacrifice. These religious actions require interaction with the landscape, as it is the source of those powers, or "medicines." Sacred power therefore requires a landscape that is intact, alive, and filled with animation. These qualities are as important today as they were in the past.

Traditional Indian peoples trace the origins of their current religious beliefs and practices back to their distant past. Scholars of Native American religions have noted the differences among religious beliefs, but also the underlying common symbols in Plains Indian religions and worldviews. Enrico Comba observed that "the ceremonies of the Plains Indians which engender a ritual representation of the cosmos . . . [share] a number of features which recur in each of the cultures"<sup>9</sup> Comba then cites how some sacred sites on the Northern Plains, particularly medicine wheels, provide an arena of recurring symbolic features of Plains religions, as they represent "a circular model of the cosmos connected with the idea of a compliance between the human world and the cosmic cycles, which seems to be fairly ancient."<sup>10</sup> Harold Harrod also suggests ideological continuities between ancient and historical Plains ways of life:

The revelatory power of nature and animal life in the experience of the people in historic times may have quite ancient roots and may have been reflected as well in the experience of their predecessors. . . . These institutions and life ways surely arose as a consequence of a long evolutionary process.<sup>11</sup>

That is, each tribal-nation, as it migrated to the northwestern Plains, integrated "institutions and life ways present among the more ancient residents," including the recognition of certain geographical locations and cultural features as sacred sources of spiritual power.<sup>12</sup>

Each indigenous society embedded those geographical and cultural "portals" to the sacred within the unique context of their own worldviews—the symbolic and social processes that structure an interpretation of a particular society's identity. A society's worldview organizes the conceptualization and expression of time, space, and causation, as well as cultural being. For Native Americans, especially among those still practicing aspects of their indigenous religions, there exists a dynamic relationship between their society's worldview and their social construction as a people.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the centrality of landscape and its qualities to the continuation of indigenous religious practices, across Native North America sacred sites on public and private lands have been under siege by lumbering, mining, recreational, and development interests. Over the course of nation-building, numerous locations have been either destroyed outright or altered to the point of rendering them useless for the continuation of indigenous religious use. This assault currently continues.

The intimate relationship that northwestern Plains religious leaders and their beliefs have with the landscape stands in contrast to Anglo-America's vision of land use. In an essay entitled "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom," Vine Deloria Jr. writes about the fundamental differences between indigenous conceptions of lands, especially sacred lands, and those held in general by non-Indians.



Those differences, he argues, are encapsulated in the current body of environmental and resource management laws:

The ironic aspect of modern land use is that during the past three decades, Congress has passed many laws which purport to protect certain kinds of lands and resources from the very developers who seek to exclude Indian religious people from using public lands. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and several other statutes all take definite steps to protect and preserve the environment in a manner more reminiscent of traditional Native American religion than that of uncontrolled capitalism or the domination of land expounded by world religions.<sup>14</sup>

The manner by which the non-Indian worldview is ingrained into current laws involving the sacred is illustrated by the definition of sacred sites written into President Clinton's Executive Order no. 13007, which pertains explicitly to sacred places:

"Sacred sites" means *any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.*<sup>15</sup>

Aside from who is an appropriate representative of an Indian religion, what exactly do such constructs as "specific," "discrete," and "narrowly delineated" mean in identifying sacred sites?<sup>16</sup> The 1996 executive order, while moving toward the full incorporation of indigenous religions into the policy fabric of

public lands, is somewhat antithetical to traditionalist conceptions of sacred sites as integrated, boundless, and interactive with their surrounding landscape. A recent case study—the Big Horn Medicine Wheel of Wyoming—illustrates the extent to which federal law and policies affect traditional religious practices on public lands of the northwestern Great Plains. It is an arena filled with controversy, manipulation, and ambiguities.

#### GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES AND NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION

Native American peoples never have enjoyed the same legal and cultural rights as other US citizens. Despite the First Amendment clause of the US Constitution, for more than two centuries indigenous peoples have suffered numerous religious persecutions. These limits to the free exercise of religious beliefs and practices extend back before the drafting of the Constitution to the colonization of Native North America. Prior to the founding of the nation, the early colonists perceived indigenous peoples as living in a state of "savagery." One defining feature of existing in a savage state, living outside of the grace of God, was demonstrated by "heathenish" dances and religious practices.

During every phase of nation-building, the federal government denigrated almost everything indigenous, including religious and cultural practices, to justify the appropriation of Native American lands and resources.<sup>17</sup> During the period from 1776 until the placement of surviving Native Americans on reservations, their cultural practices and beliefs increasingly were viewed as impediments to any movement toward "civilization."

As part of the reservation experience, indigenous lifeways faced overt persecution as governmental officials engineered the "Indian's" progress toward "civilization." Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller in 1883 created the Court of Indian Offenses to quell, by force if necessary, the "continuance of old heathenish dances," ceremonies, and the enduring influence

of aboriginal priests that are a "hindrance to civilization."<sup>18</sup> For northwestern Plains aboriginal peoples, reservation life meant the active oppression of traditional rituals and ceremonies. By threat of imprisonment or the withholding of their rations, the Sun Dance, sweat lodge, indigenous medical practices, and other aspects of religious life were either suppressed or forced underground.<sup>19</sup> Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan encapsulated Indian policy since the establishment of reservations in 1889 when he wrote that the "Indian must conform to the white man's ways, peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must."<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Native American religious and medical authorities could no longer travel freely to sacred locations that lay off-reservation. During this era, Native American people found off-reservation without a pass could be jailed for their transgression.

Open suppression of Native American religious practices continued officially until the passage of the 1934 Wheeler-Howard Act. One tenet of that law guaranteed Native Americans the right to practice their Native religions, ending nearly a half century of overt attempts to erase any vestiges of their religions. To that end, Commissioner John Collier directed all Indian Bureau field workers to halt any interference with Indian religious life.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the passage of the so-called New Deal, the law did not alter many discriminatory behaviors of Anglo-Americans or halt determined Christian denominations from their conversion efforts among Indians. Native religions continued to be targets of suppression, if not outright oppression. Over the next three decades, Native American religious leaders and their respective traditional communities struggled to maintain their religions. This was not an easy task. The loss of indigenous religious knowledge under the forced assimilation era, combined with the continued social oppression of indigenous religious practices, made "free" religious expression a tenuous affair across "Indian Country."<sup>22</sup>

Any promise of greater religious tolerance did not occur until the advent of the Civil

Rights era. Amidst the shifting political and sociological landscape of that period, the federal government issued a number of reports about the deplorable conditions of Native American life. Those reports, along with the emergence of Indian activism, culminated eventually in the policy of self-determination. On January 4, 1975, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act.<sup>23</sup> While the act addressed health, social, and political issues, Native American religious practices continued to be attacked to the fullest extent of the law. Federal authorities, a year later, arrested the Cheyenne and Arapaho for possession of eagle feathers under the 1976 Bald Eagle Protection Act. State authorities continued to arrest Native American Church members for peyote use. Across the country, tribal peoples routinely were denied access to sacred lands by federal and state agencies as well as private landowners.<sup>24</sup>

Responding to these actions, Native Americans lobbied for a bill to protect Native American religious rights. On December 15, 1977, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) was introduced into the Senate.<sup>25</sup> Approximately eight months later, President Jimmy Carter signed the bill into law. The act states, in part, that

it shall be policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.<sup>26</sup>

Framing a policy around inherent rights to exercise "traditional religions" did extend federal trust responsibilities and, in principle, aspects of tribal sovereignty to public lands. The federal mandate to consider tribal religious practices on public lands was implicitly outlined in section 2 of the act. That section

stipulates that various federal agencies, departments, and other entities evaluate their current policies and procedures in consultation with Native American leaders to determine changes necessary to preserve cultural rights and practices.

To discover any discriminatory practices embedded in federal policies, a task force examined the extant cultural differences between Native Americans and Anglo-Americans under the belief that this "cultural gulf" generated most discriminatory practices by federal agencies. The *American Indian Religious Freedom Act Report*, delivered to Congress in 1979, made several key suggestions that federal agencies "could" implement.<sup>27</sup> But as President Carter acknowledged from the outset, the law would "protect and preserve" the inherent right of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian people to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religion, but it was not intended to "override existing law."<sup>28</sup>

Even before the task force finished its report, AIRFA was tested in a number of arenas. In most instances, especially with regard to land development involving federal and state agencies, the law failed to protect indigenous religious practices. One of the most devastating Supreme Court decisions was the 1988 *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*. The case involved a challenge by three northern California tribal-nations, who believed that the intent of the US Forest Service to construct a road and conduct developmental activities in the Six Rivers National Forest through a sacred area, would destroy the core of their religious beliefs and practices.<sup>29</sup> Ignoring critical ethnographic data collected from Yurok, Karok, and Tolowa religious authorities by a US Forest Service anthropologist, who conceded that the failure to conduct these ceremonies will result in great harm to the earth and to the people whose welfare depends upon it, the court majority in *Lyng* concluded that "to accept the Indians' exercise claims would amount to establishing 'religious servitude' on public lands, vesting the government of its 'right to use, for all, its land.'"<sup>30</sup>

The *Lyng* decision set a number of precedents for the future "protection" and "access" of all Native American sacred sites on public lands. Foremost is that the tribes' lack of title to the lands in question precluded their right to advance First Amendment claims. Also, federal agencies have the final decision in the disposition of any lands under its charge, despite indigenous concerns or claims.<sup>31</sup>

These legal parameters surrounding indigenous religious practices stand in contradiction to the evolving body of laws concerning the preservation of our national heritage. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 specified that sites associated "with significant traditional events in the history (which may be folkloric) of the group that values them" is eligible for listing in the National Register.<sup>32</sup> Further clarification of "traditional events" associated with specific places was detailed in a 1990 National Park Service bulletin. At that time, the label Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) was assigned to such locations.<sup>33</sup> Two years later, after demands by various federal agencies to specify the criteria to assess the significance of sites, Congress amended the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, explaining the criteria for the inclusion of a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Register.<sup>34</sup> Despite an evolving body of laws crafted to strengthen indigenous concerns, there remains, according to Steven Moore,

an unmistakable fear, paranoia, or distrust by federal personnel of the motives of Native people and their desire to protect the spiritual value of physical place. The net effect is to make clear to Native people that agencies and the resource management "experts" ultimately call the shots. So while "they" will talk to "you," the import of the policy is that "they" define the process and "they" make the final decision by "their" rules. From the Native perspective, it is "business as usual."<sup>35</sup>

The established policy implications and the legal alternatives for the protection of sacred



sites are clear. Native American consultation may be mandated under current policy guidelines, but federal agencies do not have to implement any management goals that may support indigenous practices or concerns. In recognition of how policies are being implemented and the inability of AIRFA to protect indigenous religious rights, on May 24, 1996, President Clinton issued Executive Order no. 13007. The executive order requires federal land managers to "accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners, where such accommodation is not clearly inconsistent with law or essential agency functions."<sup>36</sup> The law also requires managers to avoid adverse effects to the physical integrity of sacred sites, "but subject to the same caveats."<sup>37</sup> The order was intended as a supplement to strengthen protections afforded under the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the 1994 AIRFA amendments, while avoiding any acrimonious legislative debate.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the accumulating body of laws, regulations, executive orders, and policies on cultural resources and their protection, indigenous issues remain either largely ignored or a low priority in most land management decisions. During the height of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel controversy, for example, the Bighorn National Forest federal archeologist correctly proclaimed that the site "can be a landmark and a federal agency can destroy it. . . . There's nothing in the law that physically stops you from destroying this site."<sup>39</sup> His proclamation, then, remains legally correct today. It is against this legal environment that indigenous religious and cultural leaders of their respective communities struggle with sacred site issues.

#### BIG HORN MEDICINE WHEEL: BALANCING THE SACRED AGAINST THE PROFANE

Resting on the western border of Medicine Mountain in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming is the Big Horn Medicine Wheel (archeological site 48BH302). The site lies at an elevation of approximately 9,460 feet in the

Arctic/Alpine zone.<sup>40</sup> Native American peoples have used the Medicine Wheel and surrounding region for spiritual and ceremonial activities for centuries, despite the seasonal climatic severity.

After its "discovery," Euro-Americans viewed the Big Horn Medicine Wheel as a "curious relic" with little economic or cultural value. With little regard to the site and its surrounding location, extractive industries such as mining, timber, and ranching developed in the Bighorn Mountains. The local communities of Lovell, Cowley, Byron, and others grew along the base of the Bighorn Mountains along strategic commerce routes or in rich agricultural districts, incorporating these extractive industries into their local economies.

Today an extractive and service economy continues to dominate the Bighorn Mountains and the local region. Sheep and cattle grazing still continue in the mountains, along with logging, hunting, fishing, and numerous outdoor pursuits. In addition to many summer outdoor activities, snowmobiling is an important winter pursuit, with one route traveling over Medicine Mountain near the site.

A growing industry is tourism. Since the Bighorn Mountains lay on a scenic route to Yellowstone National Park, the local regional communities sought to attract tourists. Recognizing the Big Horn Medicine Wheel has economic benefit, local Anglo citizens attempted as early as 1915 to have the site designated as a national landmark. That landmark status was achieved in 1970 under the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act in sole recognition of its archeological value.

The landmark designation set the stage for the controversy. Ignoring the surrounding landscape, the Medicine Wheel site alone was demarcated as the landmark. The landmark designation also allowed for multiple uses of the area. Public use of the area would be potentially intensified by implementing plans to improve the road and parking lot, construct a visitor's center, and build a raised viewing platform around the sacred site. Those plans remained dormant until 1989 when they were

revived in conjunction with the Elk Draw and Tillet's Hole timber sales.<sup>41</sup>

The prospect of the site becoming a tourist mecca, along with the timber sales, would effectively destroy Medicine Wheel as a sacred site. In response to the growing threat, Gary Kimble of the Association on American Indian Affairs proclaimed that the Big Horn Medicine Wheel "is a sacred site and should be protected as such."<sup>42</sup> Locally, Native American religious authorities formed grassroots organizations—the Medicine Wheel Alliance and Medicine Wheel Coalition—to contest the land development plans.<sup>43</sup> For the Native American participants it meant sharing vital cultural and religious information in an attempt to halt the annihilation of one of the most sacred sites in the northwestern Great Plains. The ensuing controversy poignantly illustrates the inherent tensions that develop between indigenous concerns surrounding "the sacred" and the realities of multiple-use land management policies on public lands.

#### IDEOLOGICAL CONTINUITIES OF TRADITION: LINKING THE PRESENT WITH THE PAST

One of most striking cultural manifestations to appear during the Late Prehistoric period is the stone architectural feature labeled "medicine wheels." Of the approximately 135 known medicine wheels across the Great Plains, the Big Horn Medicine Wheel is an anomaly in complexity and in composition.<sup>44</sup>

Although first "discovered" by Anglo-Americans in the 1880s, archeological investigations did not occur until the late 1950s under the auspices of the Wyoming Archaeological Society. The excavations reveal the presence of fire hearths, chipped stone artifacts, leather, bone, wood, a brass bead, various glass trade beads, a perforated shell bead, and a potsherd. Many of the items came from within the excavated cairns.<sup>45</sup>

Other investigations reveal that the initial construction of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel began during the Late Prehistoric. The data

also suggest strongly that the Medicine Wheel is a composite structure with the radials younger than the central cairn.<sup>46</sup> The structural alterations to the site over time represent each society's attempt to establish a relationship with the spiritual powers that inhabit the site itself and surrounding landscape.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the inability of archeologists to establish direct connections between the site and contemporary indigenous societies, the Big Horn Medicine Wheel reveals striking cultural continuities that transcend ethnic differences over time. Foremost, the Medicine Wheel architecturally reflects social conceptions of the sacred. Regardless of who the original builders were, every indigenous society that encountered it contributed to the site's structural and ideological complexity. The Crow recognized that the wheel was made by "people who had no iron," but used the site for vision questing.<sup>48</sup> Elk River, a Northern Cheyenne elder, told George Bird Grinnell that the Medicine Wheel

represented the wall of the Medicine Lodge; the lines leading toward the center, the rafters—or, as he called them, the lodge poles—of the Medicine Lodge; and the small circle in the center of the large one, from which the spokes radiate, represented the center pole of the Medicine Lodge. He added that the building to the northwest of the entrance, and within the circle and touching it, was the place from which thunder came; and by this I understood him to mean what I call the altar—the place in the Cheyenne Medicine Lodge which is especially sacred, and in which is the buffalo skull.<sup>49</sup>

Accumulating ethnological data from northwestern Plains societies about other medicine wheels reveal a multiplicity of sacred uses for medicine wheels. They served as vision quest sites, memorials to prominent leaders and events, navigational aids, ethnic boundary markers, a means of clocking astronomically

important religious observances, a place to receive spiritual healing, as well as possible Sun Dance and Thirst Dance structures.<sup>50</sup>

The multiplicity of uses for medicine wheels recorded in the ethnology indicates how each indigenous society incorporated the structures into their unique cultural traditions. They did so because they recognized the sacred nature of the medicine wheel and the surrounding landscape. Moreover, prehistoric and historic Native American societies who lived in or passed through the region incorporated the Big Horn Medicine Wheel into their worldviews as a sacred entity.<sup>51</sup> The Medicine Wheel clearly served as a religious destination for various tribal-nations over many centuries, a cultural practice that continues to the present day.

Contemporary religious authorities continue to view the Big Horn Medicine Wheel and its surrounding landscape within a framework of a shared symbolism. They acknowledge the site as a source of sacred power. Through this recognition, religious authorities integrate Medicine Mountain and the Medicine Wheel into their unique worldview—the symbolic and social processes that structure an interpretation about a particular society's identity.<sup>52</sup> Despite their distinct worldviews, northwestern Plains religious practitioners from different tribes have a universal understanding that the Medicine Wheel, as a sacred site, is a place by which humans relate to nature, to the spiritual environment, and to the cosmos. It is a place to which people journey specifically to seek medicines, renew their relationship with the spirits, and find a sense of renewal. An elder from Fort Peck spoke to this issue:

We have many different tribes here, you know. They're all from the Plains Indians, like Lakotas, and they developed their own language and they lived their own ways. And there was only one instruction—for the pipe, for the vision quest, for the Sun Dance, for the Sweat Lodge. And now, throughout my travels, there's many differ-

ent versions, many different legends came about among them. But basically, they're the same. . . . This is what we want to try to preserve for our future generations. We come up here [to the Medicine Wheel] to get our directions.<sup>53</sup>

Viewed in this manner, many Indian peoples recognize both the diversity of their various traditions as well as common underlying elements of belief and practice. The essential point is that the Big Horn Medicine Wheel is a symbolic form that remains alive, spiritually vital in ongoing Plains religious practice and ceremonial life. The Medicine Wheel constitutes a crucial link between contemporary Plains Indian religious symbolism and practice, and its own distant past.<sup>54</sup>

Contemporary tribal traditions also view the Big Horn Medicine Wheel as a sacred arena where peoples who once were enemies can congregate without conflict. A number of oral traditions relay that conflict is antithetical to worshipping at the site. One Crow elder recounted a tradition told to him by his grandfather. While at the Medicine Wheel his relative encountered two Sioux. Even though they were traditional enemies, all three prayed at the site.<sup>55</sup> In meeting each other at Medicine Mountain they knew that they shared a common spiritual purpose, to obtain their medicines. Any conflict would violate the sacred nature of the landscape.

Avoidance of conflict because of the sacred nature of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel extends to other social arenas. A Northern Cheyenne elder often remarked how difficult it was in "fighting" administrative "battles" for the preservation of the site:

As a traditional community, we do not like to see the Medicine Wheel drawn into an area of debate. It's a religious issue. In fact, every time we talk about the Medicine Wheel or any areas of this nature we say a prayer. A very solemn discussion is had.

I find it difficult to talk about the Medicine Wheel when the Forest Service



is listening. They have no idea of what I am saying. I have enlisted the help of people who can debate. I will not debate the issue, we don't do that. This is strictly a religious issue.<sup>56</sup>

In the "Cheyenne way," one does not debate or dispute sacred issues. Other elders noted that physical or verbal conflict of any kind should be avoided at the Medicine Wheel. In this manner, disparate cultural communities merge into "one" in relation to the sacredness of the location.

Because of the common ground of the sacred underlying contemporary Plains Indians religious experiences, the Big Horn Medicine Wheel transcends individual and tribal religious practices. The site emerges as a unifying symbolic arena that simultaneously connects tribal heritages through disparate religious beliefs and expressions. The Big Horn Medicine Wheel, similar to the Black Hills, Sweetgrass Hills, Devils Tower, and Valley of the Chiefs, signifies the willingness of northwestern Plains peoples to selectively incorporate sacred landscapes as they encountered them.<sup>57</sup> The Big Horn Medicine Wheel, like other sacred sites, provides an immediate well-spring for living tribal religious traditions—sacred traditions that are manifested through ritual, prayer, or ceremony. Once these traditions are acquired, they are institutionalized through the passing of that religious knowledge to others.

While the site itself may be the ultimate destination, the connections to the site extend beyond to incorporate the surrounding landscape. This point is illustrated in a comment made by a Wind River Shoshone elder who said, "To my understanding this whole range, the Bighorns, is sacred. And when you first begin seeing the range, that was the beginning of your quest."<sup>58</sup> In all northwestern Plains religious ideologies, entering the sacred is in itself a sacred act. Approaching the site must be done with a sincerity of purpose and action. Contemporary religious practitioners consciously draw parallels between going to

the Big Horn Medicine Wheel at present and the ritual preparation of pre-reservation times. Approaching a sacred landscape is an endeavor that requires that "things be done in the right way."<sup>59</sup> The pilgrimage to the site by Native American religious practitioners relates to the sacred attributes of the wheel, namely, the Medicine Wheel as a cosmological directional center and temporal guide.

In the historical and contemporary accounts, the Big Horn Medicine Wheel and other major sacred sites play an essential role as a symbolic template for ceremonial people. Sacred sites are an integral part of the larger cosmological order by which people orient their movements and activities. Elders from various northwestern Plains tribal-nations report traditions and practices in which the Medicine Wheel figures as a directional marker in space and time. The journey to the site and prayers at the Medicine Wheel are directionally linked through the site's architectural structure. In their explanations, the wheel itself is a center that symbolically shapes the meanings of the land or a tribe's connections to it. A Wind River Shoshone elder expressed that principle of symbolic centrality:

I was told that in one of our ceremonies you stand right in the center of the Wheel. . . . You're in the center there with God. And you want God to send that power to your people . . . To give them plenty of food, and good health. . . . Well, there's these spokes point the way . . . that you came, toward your area, where you came from. Where the passageway was. . . . [That way] you send it [your prayer] from God straight to your people. And that way, you can bring your people into the Wheel itself. With the direction. Because, remember, we're all based on direction.<sup>60</sup>

According to traditional understanding, each spoke symbolically connects the sacred actions of individuals at the Medicine Wheel with their people. The radiating "spokes" are conduits that integrate individual actions with



FIG. 2. Path to Medicine Wheel is in lower left foreground. This is the preferred route for many of the Native American religious practitioners.

the cosmological social orders. Prayers and spiritual powers may originate from the sacred, but they emanate to those who are in need. Northern Cheyenne elders also associate the Medicine Wheel with a locality that is part of a larger sacred order guided by celestial events. Their contemporary interpretations are corroborated by ethnological evidence.<sup>61</sup>

For Northern Plains Native peoples, the rhythms of life, including major ceremonials, are governed by movements of the seasons, in which space and time must be intimately interrelated. Temporal as well as spatial orientation is a religious context that has a moral dimension. Scholars of Plains Indian religious beliefs and practices observe that humans must be responsible participants in the patterns, cycles, movements, and processes of nature. Deward Walker notes the intimate relation-

ship between religious responsibilities and sacred landscapes:

In reviewing some 300 sacred sites I have noticed that all groups tend to hold sacred the boundaries between cultural life and geological zones. In addition, all groups possess a body of beliefs concerning the appropriate sacred times and rituals to be performed at such sites. It has also become apparent to me that sacred sites serve to identify fundamental symbols and patterns of American Indian cultures.<sup>62</sup>

To religious authorities who use the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, it has important associations not only with earthly space but also with cosmological and seasonal time. In particular, the Medicine Wheel plays a role in

orienting the seasonal rounds of acquiring traditional medicines and scheduling ceremonial activities.

A Wind River Shoshone elder connects directly the Medicine Wheel to the timing of the Sun Dance. For the Shoshones, "The Medicine Wheel . . . would tell . . . about when you were going to have your Sun Dance . . . and it would tell you the times of season."<sup>63</sup>

Other elders and religious authorities associated the Medicine Wheel's use with astral knowledge. To use medicine wheels, Crow religious leaders had to have considerable knowledge of important spring constellations. That astral knowledge is remembered and passed on through the Old Woman's Grandchild oral tradition. The tradition related how an orphan boy, the sacred product of a union between the Sun and a Hidatsa woman, makes the earth safe for human habitation. Orphan Boy, along with the actions of a set of twins who appear later in the tradition, slaughter various beings. Through their maiming and killing of the beings, the stars are created related to the use of the wheels. Of the stars and constellations created, three are central to the function of medicine wheels: *Ikyā Deaxe*, the Pale Star; Rigel, which is part of *Ikyā-ishe*, or Orion's Belt; and Aldebaran. Interestingly, Aldebaran, Sirius, and Rigel played a central role in the timing of Cheyenne ceremonials, especially the Massaum ceremony before its eradication during the early reservation period.<sup>64</sup>

Lakota medicine men acknowledged that they "had to have a knowledge of the galaxies. . . . And they know how many days it's going to take them to get from here back to Bear Butte, by looking at the stars and knowing the seasons from how the galaxies are."<sup>65</sup> Of course, archaeoastronomical investigations reveal evidence that the Big Horn Medicine Wheel was used to observe culturally significant astronomical movements.<sup>66</sup>

To fully comprehend the contextual dimensions of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the landscape and religion, that is, integrate the historical and symbolic meanings with

present cultural interpretations, symbols, and religious practices. Major sacred sites among northwestern Plains Indians tend to be high or on dramatically up-thrusting landforms. It is here that symbolic linkages can be articulated, connecting the earth with innumerable aspects of the cosmos. These sites become primary cosmological and terrestrial anchor points, connecting all the spatial and temporal symbols in Native American religious life. Across the northwestern Plains, sacred sites comprise a constellation of fixed points on the landscape that, along with the star constellations and the seasonal progressions, serve to orient the physical and spiritual movements and activities. Sacred sites like the Big Horn Medicine Wheel connect contemporary peoples with their persistent, long-standing religious traditions.

Living oral traditions reveal a consistent, detailed, interrelated complex of beliefs and practices relating to the Big Horn Medicine Wheel. The general features of this complex are shared widely among different northwestern Plains religious authorities. The shared religious expressions across time and cultural boundaries are derived not only from the site's architectural structure, but also from the manner by which each tribe integrated their beliefs into the landscape. These symbolic connections, in association with each other and with other sacred aspects of the cosmology, form a temporal as well as spatial construct that is always constant, but continuously dynamic. Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Eastern Shoshone, and Northern Arapaho religious leaders drew symbolic associations with the Medicine Wheel as a cosmography.<sup>67</sup>

Within this shared cosmographical framework of religious understandings, many specifics of practice, oral tradition, and belief vary between tribes and individuals. Indigenous religious practitioners recognize and mutually respect these differences. In other words, a core of beliefs and practices are not just shared in common, but also form the basis for an interactive set of interrelationships between the distinct indigenous societies.



Sacred sites such as the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, Bear Butte, Devils Tower, Valley of the Chiefs, or the Badger—Two Medicine area connect and merge the sacred and profane worlds in a manner that affects human relationships as well as the cosmos. There is in northwestern Plains belief systems and religious performances a never-ending transformation from secular to sacred and from sacred to secular. This spiritual transformation and movement establishes the connection between supernatural and natural things in the universe.<sup>68</sup>

Another dimension of this spiritual transformation is the merging of the temporal with the spatial. As William Powers notes for the Lakota, "All temporal statements in Lakota are simultaneously spatial ones."<sup>69</sup> Conversely, he continues, all spatial statements are temporal.<sup>70</sup> These dynamic temporal and spatial relationships are expressed in the origins of their cosmology.

In other words, alterations in the spiritual domain impact directly the profane realm. The sacred domain, in turn, can also have profound implications in the profane world. The Big Horn Medicine Wheel and its associated landscape form a set of collective symbols that evoke transcendent passageways between sacred and profane worlds. Overall, sacred sites create "a conceptual and emotional parallelism between the objective order of the universe, the realm of spirits, and the construct of human cultures."<sup>71</sup> They are, according to Deward Walker, "places of communication with the spirits, portals where people enter the sacred."<sup>72</sup>

The controversy that arose over the Big Horn Medicine Wheel as a sacred site continues. In 1991 the US Forest Service began the process of identifying it as a Traditional Cultural Property under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For six years, the Bighorn National Forest, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Big Horn County commissioners, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and Federal Aviation Administration worked with the

Medicine Wheel Coalition and Medicine Wheel Alliance to resolve indigenous concerns about the Medicine Wheel and Medicine Mountain. The result was a Medicine Wheel Historic Preservation Plan, approved and completed in 1996. The plan established a 23,000-acre "area of consultation" around the site, permitted traditional cultural use at certain times of the year, restricted livestock grazing and timber harvesting, prohibited vehicular traffic to the site, and developed a system to monitor adverse impacts. Moreover, the plan proposed projects that would extend the National Historic Landmark boundaries.<sup>73</sup>

As these multiple parties moved constructively toward implementing the historic preservation plan, a number of political maneuvers began to erode, if not challenge, Native American religious concerns. A year before the Medicine Wheel Historic Preservation Plan was approved, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office was removed from the section 106 process because of the termination of its Native American Affairs Program. For the Native Americans involved, it meant the loss of an ally, if not an advocate.<sup>74</sup>

The Mountain States Legal Foundation, on behalf of Wyoming Sawmills, Inc., filed a lawsuit on February 16, 1999. The foundation, which views the protection of American Indian sacred sites as a violation of the First Amendment's establishment clause, supported the lumber company's desire to harvest timber in the area of the Medicine Wheel. The lawsuit directly challenges the Medicine Wheel Historic Preservation Plan signed by the US Forest Service, alleging that "the Programmatic Agreement and the [Historic Preservation Plan] unconstitutionally require the Forest service to establish and promote Native American religious practices."<sup>75</sup> Further, the closing of the Horse Creek timber sales was "undertaken for the sole purpose of furthering of furthering Native American religions." Four other claims were outlined in the lawsuit.<sup>76</sup>

The Bighorn National Forest includes more than a million acres of which about 40 percent

contains harvestable timber. The landscape set aside under the Medicine Wheel Historic Preservation Plan is less than 1 percent of the total national forest acreage. Of the acreage set aside, only 60 percent contains harvestable timber.<sup>77</sup> Yet under the establishment clause, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," the lawsuit questions the preservation plan under the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act.<sup>78</sup> Although the local court ruled in favor of the US Forest Service, upholding the historic preservation plan, Wyoming Sawmills, Inc., appealed the decision.<sup>79</sup>

As the appeal moves through the court system, the effort to establish an "appropriate" landmark boundary proceeds. Despite the fact that US Forest Service accepted Medicine Mountain as a whole as critical to indigenous concerns, their recent landmark boundary proposal only included an area around the site.<sup>80</sup> Once again, indigenous religious concerns are being directly challenged by non-Indian economic concerns, but with indigenous resistance.

#### POLITICS OF THE SACRED: PUBLIC POLICY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Contemporary Native American efforts to protect geographic locations that they deem sacred dramatize some of the most painful contradictions between Native American and Euro-American values regarding the landscape. The prevailing ideological paradigm of Euro-American society is that land, even wilderness areas, is an economic commodity to be used in some productive manner as defined by Euro-American value systems. Land, despite any aesthetic or spiritual dimensions, often is conceptualized and utilized as a source of potential personal or corporate profit. Even tourism and recreational values are embedded

in a paradigm of profane extraction and use. Unfortunately, much of those value systems are written into federal policies regarding public lands. The "multiple use" and landmark boundary designations of public lands, particularly destinations with unlimited public access, inherently views land as inert, an alienable commodity, to be appropriated for the public good. These sentiments were echoed by Susan Shown Harjo, director of the Morning Star Institute, a national organization for Native peoples' cultural and traditional rights: "What usually happens when Native sacred places are looked at for some level of protection, they are not looked at because they are Indian sacred sites, they look at environmental impacts, at the physical impact on the site itself, not at the impact it would have on the ceremonial use and the efficacy of the religious activity as well as the site itself."<sup>81</sup>

For northwestern Plains indigenous peoples, the appropriation of sacred landscapes began during the advent of Euro-American colonization. That appropriation continued with the permanent settlement of the region. Historically, religious uses of sacred areas by indigenous authorities were severed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The early reservation period, with its restrictions of off-reservation movements and policies of forced assimilation, severed direct interactions with many off-reservation sacred arenas.

Simultaneously, Euro-Americans saw value in many of these areas. Resource extraction, grazing, and tourism feed local Anglo economies. Anglo-Americans quickly incorporated these areas, just as they appropriated other features of the national landscape. In doing so, Euro-American society enfolded them into their own systems of meanings and patterns of use with relative freedom from any residual "burdens" of original indigenous cultural meanings. In this new cultural framework, sacred sites became valued for a variety of reasons, but rarely for their sacred nature derived from Native perspectives. As the Big Horn Medicine Wheel example illustrates, the site

first became a local curiosity, then an archaeological relic and scientific enigma, and finally, a tourist attraction to infuse capital into the local Anglo economy. While indigenous sacred concerns have been accommodated, that accommodation remains a contested aspect of the site's multiple-use management plan.<sup>82</sup>

Almost all other accessible or visible sacred landscapes have undergone similar ideological and political-economic transitions. One only needs to examine the legal and cultural issues surrounding Devils Tower, the Badger-Two Medicine area, Bear Butte, the Black Hills, the Sweetgrass Hills, and the Valley of the Chiefs to realize the parallels. All have, in short, evolved into an artifact, a symbol of appropriation within a Euro-American framework of meaning. By assimilating these sacred landscapes as artifacts, relics of the past, Euro-American society is able to distance these locales from their indigenous context. At times they have invented their own traditions about these areas to refute indigenous use or concerns. By doing so, Euro-American society asserts its own dominion over it.

Despite the establishment of legal mandates to incorporate indigenous concerns and perspectives into public-land policy management, Anglo-America continues to interpret and view Native American religious beliefs and practices either with a degree of scorn and derision or with avid, romantic curiosity. This contradictory mixture of derision and romantic attraction is expressed vividly every summer as countless Euro-Americans and Europeans invade "Indian Country" to satiate their appetites for experiencing an authentic Native American cultural experience or religious revelation.<sup>83</sup> At the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, sacramental and religious offerings are regularly taken or those seeking some religious experience leave items such as Barbie-doll heads. Such incidences are not uncommon. Many non-Indians, especially practitioners of New Age philosophies and others attempting to make a tenuous spiritual connection using Native American religious philosophies, often appropriate or distort in-

digenuous items or beliefs for their own purposes. These distorted perceptions and appropriations of aspects of Native American religions are as much acts of violence against them as acts of direct physical violence. Typically, symbolic and physical violence go hand in hand in our relations with the "Other."<sup>84</sup>

Even amidst today's multicultural rhetoric for diversity and respect, contemporary Native American religious practices rarely are treated with simple dignity and respect, on equal footing with other religious traditions. Most often, indigenous religious practitioners find that their needs are routinely ignored or they are alienated from critical components of their belief systems, making it nearly impossible to conduct rituals and ceremonies.

As Indian peoples struggle to reassert their religious rights by recapturing and reviving their religious traditions in this legislative environment, the open expression of Native American religious concerns surrounding sacred sites conflicts strongly with Euro-American social and economic interests. Moreover, the cultural meanings of these sites differ. Sacred sites, by Euro-American standards, are either cultural artifacts or hold a socioeconomic benefit. Euro-Americans, especially local non-Indians, often perceive open and governmentally mandated Native American religious uses of such locations as threatening, if not disorienting.

The indigenous view of the landscape as a source of spiritual knowledge, inseparable from the process of living, remains a foreign construct by Anglo-American standards.<sup>85</sup> Most Euro-Americans have no real, grounded analogs in their cultural constructs for the Native American concept of sacred place set in natural landscapes. Nor do the rituals and ceremonies at these locations as a means for promoting harmony and balance in the world order correlate with a Euro-American's conceptual framework for experience. Native American perceptions of the environment as a "living entity," with certain locations possessing a "sacred" nature, is viewed as anti-progress and



anti-capitalist.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the idea of a "sacred geography" remains an alien construct for most Euro-Americans. How could a natural area or site be a culturally recognized wellspring of spiritual knowledge?

Among indigenous northwestern Plains societies, sacred landscapes, whether natural or human-made, require continual dialogue. Human action and speech are essential to communicate with the sacred beings. Through prayer, song, and oral evocation, those seeking "medicines" activate and connect with the spiritual world. The importance of religious praxis as a vehicle for spiritual revelation is characteristic of the majority of tribes who use these sacred arenas. Contemporary northwestern Plains religious authorities recognize these sacred sites as places of pilgrimage, prayer, vision questing, ritual, and ceremony to carry out that dialogue. It is a dialogue that requires, if not demands, an animate, pure, unspoiled ecology with a degree of solitude.

Contemporary Indian religious practitioners continue to emphasize continuously to federal authorities the religious importance of sacred areas and the requirements for religious practice at such locations. At the Native American Sacred Lands Forum held in Denver and Boulder, Colorado, in October 2001, Chris Peters (Pohlik-lah/Karuk), executive director of the Seventh Generation Fund, summarized the centrality of sacred landscapes for all Native North Americans:

[B]ased upon . . . astute observations of the earth, we recognize that there are certain places within the natural ecosystem that . . . have power, spiritual power, natural forces above and beyond other places in the world. These places are indispensable and are central to our cultural, our spiritual life as Indian people. Without these sacred places or through the destruction of these sacred places, there will be certain death.<sup>87</sup>

The contrasting views among Native Americans, federal officials, and the Euro-American public not only affect political and

public policy decisions about the use and value of landscapes, especially "sacred landscapes," but are written into environmental and cultural resource management laws. While most controversies surrounding indigenous concerns over sacred sites will never completely be resolved to accommodate fully Native American religious requirements, it is evident from the bureaucratic position of defining the "sacred," religious meanings are subsumed behind "governmental power and legalities, and public support."<sup>88</sup>

The Big Horn Medicine Wheel and the Badger-Two Medicine area, as well as other sacred-site issues across the northwestern Plains, illustrate that any site deemed sacred can fall prey to religious oppression. Federal policies regarding public lands and their uses, resources, and values can play a pivotal role in providing the free exercise of indigenous religion or they can provide a platform for further Euro-American cultural domination. These issues manifest themselves in battles for control of Traditional Cultural Properties in the context of AIRFA, and such acts as President Clinton's Executive Order no. 13007.<sup>89</sup>

Most recently, Interior Secretary Gale Norton spoke to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in February 2001. During her testimony she assured the committee that she would execute a mission that sought to meet the many challenges related to American Indians and Alaskan Natives and identify those programs that will best serve Indian constituents. Shortly after that testimony, the Bush administration announced that it would renew Executive Order no. 13007.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the Bush administration's assistant secretary of Indian Affairs was directed to appoint a task force to oversee management of public lands that Indians have used. The task force would work directly with various Indian nations to identify sites, giving them direct access to the administration. When announced, American Indian leaders expressed skepticism, suggesting that present problems were more a consequence of lack of enforcement of existing law.<sup>91</sup> Arguing for a need for

greater control of management of federal lands, Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell introduced a bill entitled the "Indian Contracting and Federal Land Management Demonstration Project Act."<sup>92</sup> One centerpiece of the proposed legislation is to "better accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred land by Indian religious practitioners; and . . . to prevent significant damage to Indian sacred land."<sup>93</sup>

A close examination of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel issues suggests that the disputes today seldom revolve around the reality of indigenous traditional concerns or use. In reality, they center on two issues: competing land uses by different stakeholder groups, and the question of how to establish boundaries that acknowledge traditional Native American values. Landscapes are designated to recognize that events tied to the use of the specific features are connected. These controversies point to the problems involved in weighing a value system based on inextricably associating a spiritual world with a physical geography against a system that inherently separates the two. The economics of a location may always outweigh indigenous religious freedom. But as Chris Peters asks, "What's more American: the right to drill for oil or the right to pray?"<sup>94</sup>

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22. Russel L. Barsh, "The Illusion of Religious Freedom for Indigenous Americans," *Oregon Law Review* 65 (1986): 363-412; Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); John Gillingham, "Native American First Amendment Sacred Lands Defense: An Exercise in Judicial Abandonment," *Missouri Law Review* 54 (1989): 93-115; Margot Liberty, "The Sun Dance," in *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 164-78; Omer C. Stewart, "The Native American Church," in *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 188-96; Stewart, *Peyote Religion: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 128-47, 213-64; Stewart, "Peyote and the Law," in *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, ed. Christopher Vecsey (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991), 44-62; Fred W. Voget, *The Shoshoni-Crow Sun Dance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).

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45. See Grey, "Big Horn Medicine Wheel Site," 27-40; Wyoming Archaeological Society, "A Report on the Medicine Wheel Investigation," unpublished manuscript (Sheridan: Wyoming Archaeological Society, 1958); and Wyoming Archaeological Society, "A Report on the Medicine Wheel Investigation," *Annals of Wyoming* 31 (1959): 94-100.

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47. Archeologists have begun to explore the relationship of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel to surrounding archeological features. See George C. Frison, *Prehistoric Hunters of the High Plains* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1991), 363; and Wilson, "Sun Dances, Thirst Dances, and Medicine Wheels," 364. See also Neil A. Mirau, "Medicine Wheels on the Northern Plains: Contexts, Codes, and Symbols," in *Beyond Subsistence: Plains Archaeology and the PostProcessual Critique*, ed. Philip Duke and Michael C. Wilson (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 193-210.

48. Simms, "A Wheel Shaped Monument," 107-8.

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56. Tall Bull and Price, "Battle for the Bighorn Medicine Wheel," 96.

57. This "selective borrowing," as Joseph Brown calls it, is rooted in common shared religious understandings. It is these shared religious beliefs that made possible the survival of Northern Plains Indian religions through generations of cultural disruption and oppression. See Brown, *Spiritual Legacy*

of the American Indian, 14-18; and Ake Hultkrantz, "A Decade of Progress: Works on North American Indian Religions in the 1980s," in *Religion in Native North America*, ed. Christopher Vecsey (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1990), 168.

58. Boggs and Campbell, "Ethnographic Field Interviews," 1993.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Among the Cheyenne there are a group of religious practitioners who had spiritual control over the Oxzem, a spirit or wheel lance. The Oxzem is a spiritual gift to the E'ehyo'm, or shamans. The Oxzem is a small braided spirit wheel attached to the spirit lance. The symbolic connection between the Oxzem and the Big Horn Medicine Wheel is that each serves as a catchment for spiritual power and guides individuals and groups, giving them a sense of place or locality. The spiritual power of Oxzems to direct the movement of the Cheyenne is recounted in oral tradition, which relays how a great medicine man led the Cheyenne out of the north after being continuously overpowered by an enemy. In his right hand the medicine man held an Oxzem horizontally in front of him with the spearhead of the hoop pointing forward to show the way. The Oxzem guides the Cheyenne to new territories. Given this interpretation, it is significant that John Stands in Timber stated that the Big Horn Medicine Wheel served as a central marker to define the original territory claimed by the Cheyenne and Arapaho. See George A. Dorsey, "The Cheyenne," in *Field Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Series*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1905), 37; Karl H. Schelsier, *The Wolves of Heaven: Cheyenne Shamanism, Ceremonies, and Prehistoric Origins* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 16-17, 87, 119; and John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 124.

62. Walker, "Protecting American Indian Sacred Geography," 262.

63. Boggs and Campbell, "Ethnographic Field Interviews," 1993; Demetri B. Shimkin, "The Wind River Shoshoni Sun Dance," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 151, Anthropological Papers*, no. 41. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1953), 409.

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66. Eddy, "Astronomical Alignment at the Big Horn Medicine Wheel"; Eddy, "Probing the Mystery of the Medicine Wheels"; Eddy, "Medicine Wheels and Plains Indian Astronomy"; Eddy, "Ar-

chaeoastronomy of North America"; Kehoe and Kehoe, "Stones, Solstices, and Sun Dance Structures"; Timothy P. McCleary, *The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Life Ways* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997); Clark Wissler, *Star Legends among the American Indians*, American Museum of Natural History, Guide Leaflet Series 91 (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1936).

67. Brown, *Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*, 36. See also George A. Dorsey, "The Arapaho Sun Dance: The Ceremonies of the Offerings Lodge," *Field Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Series* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1903), 12-22; Fred Voget, *The Shoshone-Crow Sun Dance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1984), 299; Grobsmith, *Lakota of the Rosebud*, 64, New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981; Powers, *Sacred Language: The Nature of Supernatural Discourse in Lakota*, Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1986, 98; Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier, *Walking in the Sacred Manner: Healers, Dreamers, and Pipe Carriers—Medicine Women of the Plains Indians* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 19; Stephen Greymorning, personal communication, October 18, 1994.

68. Powers, *Sacred Language*, 41.

69. Powers, *Oglala Religion*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977, 174.

70. Ibid., 174.

71. Deward Walker, "Protection of American Indian Sacred Geography," in *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, ed. Christopher Vecsey (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991), 111.

72. Ibid.; see also John W. Friesen, *You Can't Get There from Here: The Mystic of North American Plains Indians Culture and Philosophy* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1995), 118-20; and R. E. Meissler, "The Medicine Wheel: An Ancient Symbol in Modern Society" (master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1993).

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93. *Ibid.*, 2.

94. Sherman, *Report of Native American Sacred Lands Forum*, xvii.



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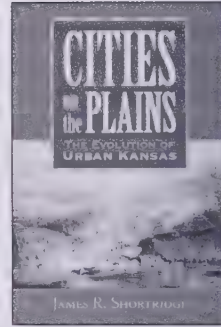
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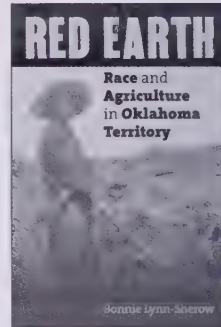
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# CONGREGATIONALIST RICHARD CORDLEY AND THE IMPACT OF NEW ENGLAND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN KANSAS, 1857-1904

NATHAN WILSON

What constitutes an authentic western hero? The archetypal image of the Jeffersonian ideal, the yeoman pioneer farmer who brought all the benefits of the American republic to the West, was the quintessential western hero until the Civil War era. Following this destructive period in American history, the armed gun-fighter or cowboy replaced the yeoman farmer as the popular image of what it meant to be a western hero. But what about the clergy? As a major social force throughout the nineteenth

century, religion proved an important factor in the settlement of the American West. Yet the idea of a religious figure as a western hero has never emerged in the popular culture adaptations of the Western, since the clergy are usually portrayed as gentle, "soft," or even somewhat effeminate.<sup>1</sup>

The image of a Protestant minister defending his homestead and town with a rifle, and later serving as a member of the Kansas militia during the Civil War, contradicts the popular stereotype. Congregational minister Dr. Richard Cordley was such a man. He embodied an intellectualized Jacksonian "common man" who preached to his congregation, yet when trouble arose was not afraid to pick up a weapon and join his fellow Kansans in the battle for independence, freedom, and liberty. Cordley's life and significance resonate across the Great Plains. His story is one among thousands who traversed the continent in the mid-nineteenth century and settled in the Great Plains. Removing denominational affiliations, Cordley's efforts at proclaiming the gospel mirror those of other western missionaries and circuit riders throughout the Dakotas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. However, unlike other

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Protestant missionaries in the Plains, Cordley's radically liberal agenda not only put a New England cultural stamp on a region of predominantly conservative, evangelical Protestants, but created a haven in eastern Kansas of liberalism and New England mores that even today stands in sharp contrast to its neighbors. Cordley's heroism manifested itself in his ability to spark moral, humanitarian, and radical reforms that helped free slaves, promote women's rights, establish educational facilities, foster prohibition legislation, and voice concerns over the inhumane treatment of American Indians and Chinese immigrants. In the process, Cordley, like other Congregational ministers of the early nineteenth century who migrated through the Ohio River valley, advocated New England cultural imperialism and transplanted New England mores to the Great Plains and Mountain West.<sup>2</sup> In 1835 noted Congregational minister Lyman Beecher issued his now-famous "Plea for the West," in which he declared that "we must educate, we must educate, or we must perish by our own prosperity. If we don't, short from cradle to the grave will be our race. If in our haste to be rich and almighty, we outrun our literary and religious institutions, they will never overtake us." Beecher's plea exemplified the complex gospel message of the early nineteenth century that was currently sweeping the nation.<sup>3</sup> His fellow Congregationalist Reverend Horace Bushnell similarly argued that "barbarism [was] the first danger" in America's contemporary thrust west.<sup>4</sup> Fearing "barbarism" and anarchy, plus the ills of perceived Catholic domination, the mainline Protestant denominations served as forerunners of the social gospel movement and the mission systems to colonize the American West. Along the way, the churches advocated moral reforms such as honoring the Sabbath, prohibition, and the abolition of prostitution; humanitarian reforms such as solving the problems of crime and disease; and radical reforms such as abolishing slavery and promoting women's rights. In so doing, most of the northern Protestant denominations aligned them-

selves to the main forces of change during the antebellum period.

Following the American Revolution and the destruction of the organized churches' control of the colonies (the Church of England in the South and the Congregational Church in the North), mission work in the newly acquired lands west of New York became a major concern for several mainline Protestant faiths. In 1783 Yale president Ezra Stiles predicted that Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians would spearhead the reform movements and "dominate the religious life of the new nation."<sup>5</sup> Although there were nearly 750 Congregational churches in 1780 and 2,200 by 1860, these statistics do not compare to the overwhelming spread of Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, and Roman Catholics into the American West.

From 1788 through 1791 Yale Congregationalist Timothy Dwight helped create a union between the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, thus ending decades of struggle and debate between the two Protestant denominations. Dwight agreed with the Presbyterians to establish a joint missionary society that would spread a New England-based faith and culture to the American West and other regions of the continent. In 1801 the Congregational Church united with the Presbyterians in a joint effort to colonize and "civilize" the American frontier. Embracing a "mixed polity," both the Congregationalists and Presbyterians agreed to share the responsibility of establishing missions in the American West to perpetuate their version of the gospel message. Under the auspices of this 1801 Plan of the Union, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed in 1810, and by 1826 it had united with the United Foreign Missionary Society.<sup>6</sup> Under this organization, famed Congregational minister Samuel Worcester was assigned as minister to the Cherokee in Georgia. Later he became notorious for his defense of Cherokee sovereignty in *Worcester v. Georgia* in 1832. Additionally, the Congregationalists joined with the New School Presbyterians and Re-



formed Dutch churches to form the American Home Missionary Society on May 10, 1826. However, internal debates and arguments between Old and New School Presbyterians divided the denomination and greatly reduced their impact on the western missionary societies. In 1837 Old School Presbyterians abandoned the Plan of the Union, and despite attempts to recruit New School Presbyterians to join, the Congregationalists abandoned the Plan in 1852. Also, on May 27, 1861, New School Presbyterians pulled out of the American Home Missionary Society, leaving the Congregationalists with total control. Although the Congregationalists would solely manage the entire organization from then on, the name was not changed to the Congregational Home Missionary Society until 1893.<sup>7</sup>

During this period the Congregationalists had also established the Andover Theological Seminary (1808) under Reverend Ebenezer Porter to facilitate additional missionary work in the American West. Proclaiming an evangelical message, nearly 40 percent of all foreign missionaries were Massachusetts-based Congregationalists. The first attempts by these various missionary societies focused on establishing religious institutions and spreading the message of Christ, but a small group of Andover graduates set their dreams and goals on a higher trajectory. Although western clerics, such as these Andover graduates, would never achieve the fame and recognition of their better-known eastern counterparts, they would refocus the social gospel message in innovative fashions to meet the needs of their western parishioners.

In 1856, following the heated Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and the ensuing rage between proslavery forces and abolitionists, four clerics, Reverends Sylvester Dava Storrs, Roswell Davenport Parker, Grosvenor C. Morse, and Richard Cordley, established the "Andover Band," later named the "Kansas Band." Their goal was to counteract the proslavery forces in Kansas and form a truly Christian state within the American West. However, the Kansas Band were not the first



FIG. 1. *The Andover Band*. Reprinted from W. L. Sutherland, "An Historical Sketch of the Congregational Sunday School Work in Kansas, 1854-1905," in *Memorial Volume: Being Papers Read at the General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas, Semi-Centennial Session, Lawrence, Kansas, June 14-18, 1904*, edited by J. G. Dougherty. Photograph courtesy of Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

Congregationalists to enter the region. In 1819 the Congregationalists had united with the Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed Church to establish missions with the Osage Indians, and by 1824 had opened Neosho Mission.<sup>8</sup> These missionaries "exerted a large influence on the moral and religious development of the state."<sup>9</sup> In 1854 two groups from New England also traveled to Kansas to defeat the proslavery vote. By 1856 the New England Emigrant Aid Company had set up a few colonies in the eastern sections of the state. After receiving letters from Congregational settlers and Reverend Storrs in Kansas, the twenty-eight-year-old Richard Cordley decided to journey west from Michigan to the newly founded Free

State town of Lawrence, Kansas. As Cordley later noted in his memoir, "the band owed its existence to the heart and brain of Sylvester D. Storrs, who first suggested it and worked persistently for its success. Its first inspiration was due to the Kansas troubles which were then at their height, but the chief thought was to develop a Christian state in the center of the continent."<sup>10</sup>

Born on September 6, 1829, in Nottingham, England, Richard Cordley belonged to the new wave of immigrants who arrived in America in the early nineteenth century. Cordley was only four years old when his parents, James and Ann Minta Cordley, traveled to Michigan and settled in Livingston County, fifteen miles southwest of Ann Arbor. He was nine years old before he attended his first formal school in the area. As Cordley observed, "[M]y mother was a cultivated woman, and taught me herself, and I could read quite well before I knew what a school was."<sup>11</sup> Born into a family of ten children, of which six boys survived, Cordley was raised in an orthodox household that honored the Sabbath.<sup>12</sup> When he was ten years old, he lost sight in one eye when he fell behind an oxen team stuck in the mud and gouged his eye on one of their horns.<sup>13</sup> In 1838 the first school district was established in the area by Cordley's father. This frontier log schoolhouse held three months of school every winter. When Cordley was fourteen, he attended school at the nearby Ann Arbor Classical School. To fund his education, he worked nine months on the farm and attended school for three months. In 1850 he entered the state university. Four years later, Cordley graduated from Michigan University and in July 1857 from Andover Theological Seminary. Topeka cleric Lewis Bodwell journeyed to Andover to convince Cordley and his fellow Andover graduates to emigrate to Kansas. In May 1857 the American Home Missionary Society's senior secretary, Dr. Milton Badger, visited the Andover graduates and arranged for their expedition to Kansas.<sup>14</sup> Badger and the American Home Missionary Society agreed to pay Cordley a salary of \$600.

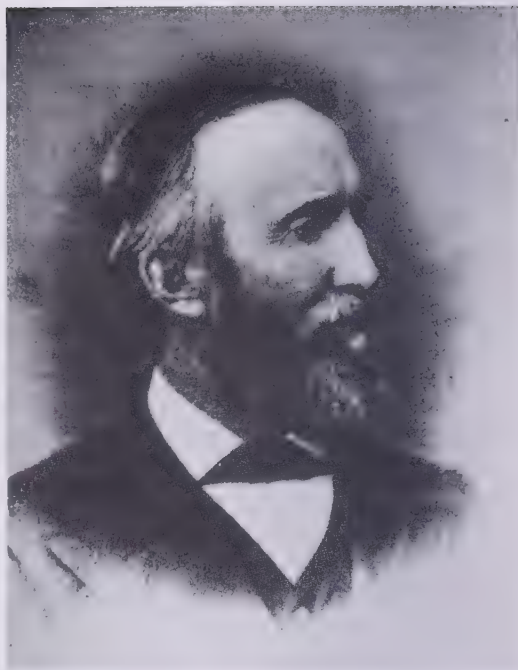


FIG. 2. Rev. Richard Cordley, D.D., 1829-1904. Reprinted from *Memorial Volume*. Photograph courtesy of Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

Before leaving for Kansas, Cordley spent the summer at home in Michigan on a short vacation. He had received an offer to preach at the university in Ann Arbor but declined, despite the offer of a salary two or three times as large as that from Plymouth Congregational.<sup>15</sup> As he noted, "I spent the summer at my old home in Michigan, and enjoyed the first real vacation I had had for many years. I was worn down when I left the seminary, and this summer at home was of great benefit to me."<sup>16</sup> On November 8, 1857, Cordley arrived in Jefferson City, Missouri, about 200 miles from the Kansas border. After spending some time with Reverend Storrs in Quindaro, Kansas, Cordley traveled the remaining forty miles to Lawrence. Reaching Lawrence later that month, Cordley recollected that the city "was the Jerusalem of my hopes." Cordley hoped to "transplant the principles and institutions of the Puritans to these fertile plains," to "pro-

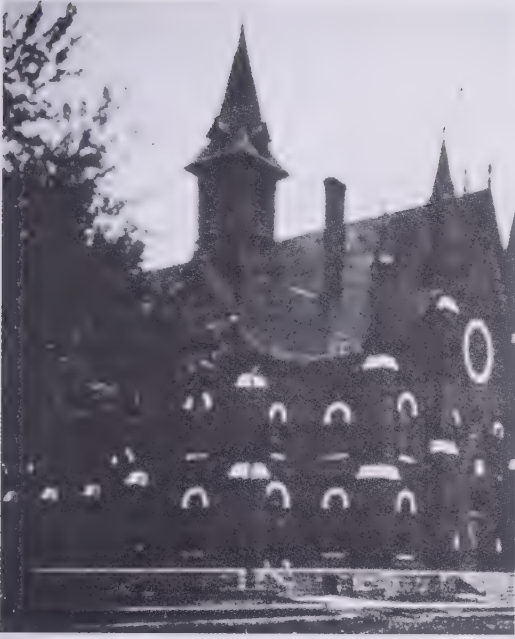


FIG. 3. Plymouth Church, 1904. Reprinted from Leon C. Schnacke, "Congregationalism in Kansas," in *Memorial Volume*. Photograph courtesy of Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

claim the gospel in Kansas."<sup>17</sup> He was delighted to discover a Congregational church already established in the location, as Plymouth Congregational Church had been founded by Reverend Samuel Y. Lum in 1854.<sup>18</sup> A member of the American Home Missionary Society, Lum was part of the second New England Emigrant Aid Company's group to venture to Kansas shortly after the first arrivals earlier in the year. Lum delivered his first sermon on October 1, 1854, in a tent, the precursor to the Plymouth setting. By October 15, Lum and his small congregation of ten followers resolved to build a permanent building. As Cordley noted, "their circumstances and their purposes corresponded with those of the Plymouth Pilgrims," hence the name of the church.<sup>19</sup> In the following year, 1855, Lum was instrumental in establishing the Congregational General Association of Kansas, which would serve as a "synod" of Kansas Congrega-

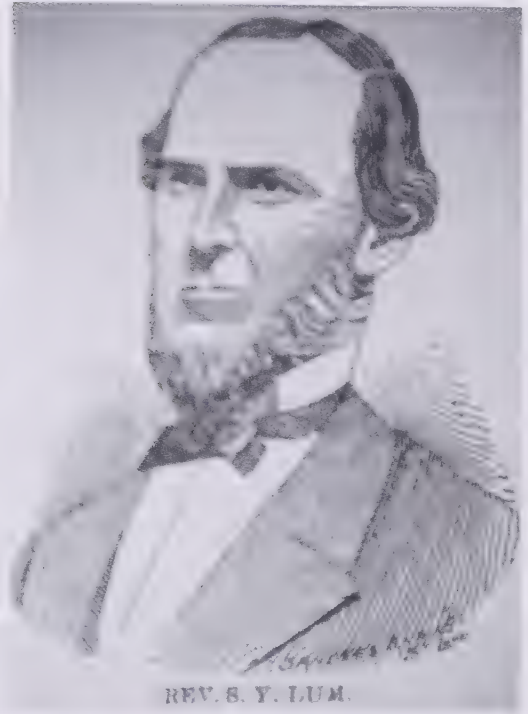


FIG. 4. Rev. S. Y. Lum. Reprinted from Richard Cordley, "Historical Sketch of Plymouth Church, Lawrence, Kansas," in *The Kansas Telephone*, ed. R. D. Parker (Manhattan, KS, July 1893). Photograph courtesy of Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

tional ministers. At their first meeting in 1857, Lum decreed "that the system of American Chattel Slavery is a high crime against God and humanity, and as such, is *prima facie* evidence against the Christian character of those implicated in it." Thus began the Kansas Congregational radical reform movement.<sup>20</sup> However, by 1857 Lum's health had deteriorated and he resigned that spring; Cordley was ordained as minister later that year. Cordley arrived in Lawrence to preach his first sermon at Plymouth Congregational to a congregation of twenty-two members on December 2, 1857.<sup>21</sup> On January 21, 1858, he was officially ordained by the Congregational Council at Quindaro. Two years later, he humorously addressed his congregation and discussed the loss of Lum and the congregation's selection



of him as replacement: "In the midst of the discussion, your present pastor came upon you unasked, and hard times soon after collapsing the pockets of the people, the church resigned itself to its fate, and has never since gathered courage enough to shake off the incubus."<sup>22</sup>

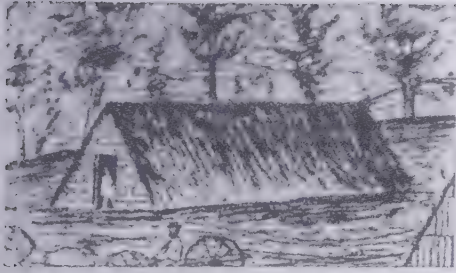
A staunch advocate of New England moral reforms, Cordley began his service in Kansas by addressing the issue of honoring the Sabbath. At the 1858 General Association meeting, attended by both Cordley and Lum, Cordley decreed "that we regard the Sabbath as a divine institution, founded upon the wants of human nature; and we believe its strict observance necessary to the physical and moral welfare of the race."<sup>23</sup> Like most Congregational and other Protestant ministers of the nineteenth century, Cordley also advocated the prohibition of alcohol. In his scrapbook, Cordley kept documented scientific records and medical evidence that described the horrible problems of alcoholism.<sup>24</sup>

During his time in Lawrence, Cordley offered Lum's unfinished Congregational church as the headquarters for the Constitutional Convention meeting, held in 1857. Determined to influence the moral development of the region, Cordley realized that his influence as a Congregational minister was necessary to sway an antislavery constitution for the developing state. Yet in spite of his avowed goals, Cordley's impressions of Lawrence were somewhat bleak: "There were scarcely any fences or dooryards, and gardens were almost unknown. There had been hardly a tree or bush planted on the town site. All this was strange to me and gave a lonesome, desolate impression. That I had no home and had to wait three weeks before I could have a room of my own, no doubt added to the sense of loneliness."<sup>25</sup> From 1857 to 1860 Cordley lived through "depressing times." Immigration from New England to Kansas had halted completely, and the westward migration known as the California gold rush failed to bring any permanent settlers to the area.<sup>26</sup> Also, when Cordley arrived in 1857, he came alone. After only one year, he returned to his home in

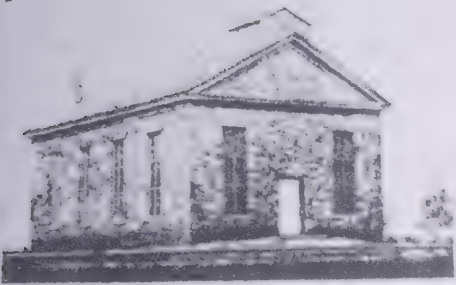
Michigan, married Mary Minta Cox in May 1859, and brought her back to Kansas. Although they had no children of their own, in 1875 the Cordleys adopted Margaret Jones. While the adoption record does not give her age, she is listed as a minor. Called "Maggie" by the Cordleys, she married in 1881 but preceded her parents in death in 1889.<sup>27</sup> On November 16, 1862, the completed Plymouth Congregational Church was dedicated in a ceremony conducted by fellow minister and friend Reverend Roswell Davenport Parker of Wyandotte, Kansas. Plymouth Congregational seated 350 members and cost \$8,000 to complete. Although Cordley's congregation numbered only seventy at the opening, the completion of the worship house signified that the promise for the future of Congregational reform remained strong.

By the autumn of 1857, there were eight Congregational churches in the state. As Cordley stated, "the fellowship of the churches was not an easy thing to establish and a still more difficult thing to maintain."<sup>28</sup> Although the distance between Lawrence, Topeka, Wyandotte, Emporia, Quindaro, and Leavenworth was relatively small by today's standards, at that time it added to the isolation and difficulty of procuring New England-style reform in the area. Despite these difficulties, Cordley was able to establish three Congregational churches in the town of Lawrence alone, along with furthering several reform causes in the region. Although Cordley's Plymouth Congregational Church (1854-present) is the only original city structure left today, the other two Congregational facilities served important roles during the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries.

In 1860 Cordley established the Congregational Church of Wakarusa, about five miles south of Lawrence. Additionally, in 1862 Cordley helped organize the Second Congregational Church of Lawrence, later named the Lawrence Colored or the "Freedman's Church." As a result of Cordley's reform efforts among runaway slaves at Plymouth Congregational, many newly educated slaves decided to form



THE HAY TENT, LAWRENCE,  
1854.



PLYMOUTH CHURCH, LAWRENCE  
Begun 1857, Finished 1862

FIG. 5. *The Hay Tent, Lawrence, 1854, and Plymouth Church, Lawrence, begun in 1857 and finished in 1862. Reprinted from Leon C. Schnacke, "Congregationalism in Kansas," in Memorial Volume. Photograph courtesy of Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.*

their own congregation. Despite being known as "contrabands" among the Congregational elite, these renegade churches offered African Americans both power and control over their spiritual destinies. From its inception in March 1862, Second Congregational Church was specifically designed to assist runaway slaves and freedmen living in Lawrence. Sponsoring educational programs, Sunday schools, and other innovative reform measures, Cordley was able to secure volunteer instructors to serve

as teachers for the African American community. As he stated:

On Sabbath evening, March 16, a Church was organized among the "Contrabands" at Lawrence, as the "Second Congregational Church." Eight persons covenanted to unite, and others are expected to unite. Only one of these persons had a letter of dismissal from the Church from which he came. His letter was made out for himself and wife. We asked him where his wife was. He replied, "they sold my wife and children down South before I got away. But I got a letter for both, hoping I might find her sometime." We have seldom seen Slavery in so odious an aspect.<sup>29</sup>

Cordley was also able to garner funds for the church from the Congregational Union for this venture. The second church itself would be owned by the Plymouth Congregational Church trustees, but, as Cordley declared, "it is held, of course, in trust for the Second Congregational Church, to be transferred to them whenever the legal status of the Contrabands shall be sufficiently determined to make such a transfer safe."<sup>30</sup> Although Cordley served as pastor of Second Congregational on occasion, the pastorate remained largely vacant until Daniel Ellex became pastor and the church was officially commissioned in 1863. Lawrence's Second Congregational Church was finally dedicated, despite the absence of a minister, on September 28, 1862, with Cordley's Plymouth Congregational Church officially holding the title. Prior to Ellex's arrival, the vacant church boasted a total of only eight members, six men and two women. But under Cordley's leadership there were 60 members who attended the Second Congregational Sabbath schools. Under Ellex's control, membership rose to twenty-three, ten men and thirteen women, with a Sabbath school attendance of 100 in the first year. From 1864 to 1866 membership rose and then declined. Interestingly, while total membership fluctuated over the period, the number of

female members was always greater than the number of males attending the church. However, throughout 1864 Ellex's members who participated in the Sabbath schools outnumbered Cordley's. By 1865 Cordley's Sabbath numbers doubled those of Second Congregational Church. During Quantrill's raid in 1863, Second Congregational was burned. Though later rebuilt, the church only lasted until the early years of the twentieth century. In 1900 the church had only nineteen members; it eventually closed its doors in 1903.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from Second Congregational Church, Richard Cordley also was instrumental in the founding of Lawrence Pilgrim Church in 1867. Another of the "contraband" churches, Lawrence Pilgrim, unlike Second Congregational, was not immediately recognized by the national Congregational authorities. From 1867 to 1912 Lawrence Pilgrim, or "North Lawrence Congregational Church," functioned primarily for Congregationalists who couldn't attend Cordley's main branch at Plymouth. Reverend J. Franklin Morgan of Boston relocated to Lawrence and held religious services at Pilgrim for four years. With the rising population of Lawrence, Cordley believed that a second Free-State church would best facilitate Congregationalist needs and desires, as well as draw more members into the faith. However, during a massive flood in 1903, Pilgrim's structure was damaged. On December 10, 1910, the last service was held in Pilgrim, and on November 17, 1911, the church united with Plymouth. However, the union was not official until January 7, 1912.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from his church-building efforts, Cordley remained an advocate of New England moral and radical reforms and was quickly inaugurated into the seething sectional crisis that began to divide the nation and state. Like other Congregational reformers, Cordley advocated the keeping of the Sabbath, prohibition (except in medicinal capacities), education, and, most importantly, the abolition of slavery, the freedom of American Indians, the promotion of women's rights, and the recent concerns over Chinese immigration.

In the late 1850s Cordley continued his moral and radical reform efforts and established several Sunday schools specifically to educate runaway slaves. Also, he formed night schools that drew on volunteer Lawrence teachers to assist in the education process. In the summer of 1859 Cordley utilized a Kansas-style underground railroad to free runaway slaves escaping from Missouri and other nearby slave territories. "I had burned with indignation when the law [Fugitive Slave Act] was passed in 1850," he had said.<sup>33</sup> In 1856, during a great exodus of runaway slaves to the state, Gen. James H. Lane and others established "Lane's Trail," complete with stone markers from Topeka to Nebraska City, to assist the slaves' escape into Canada. In one such incident, Cordley housed a young slave girl named Lizzie and helped her flee the proslavery forces that wanted to recapture her. Cordley later recollected that "we came to look forward with dismay to the time when Lizzie must leave us."<sup>34</sup> Famed proslavery militant William Quantrill once called for Cordley's execution and declared his intention to "kill that damned abolitionist preacher."<sup>35</sup> When Quantrill sacked the town of Lawrence on August 21, 1863, many Free State supporters and Congregational church members were brutally slain. Cordley remembered the raid as "a general and indiscriminate slaughter."<sup>36</sup> During the attack, Cordley, his wife, and little daughter, Maggie, abandoned their home and fled for safety at the riverbank.<sup>37</sup> Cordley's house and all possessions were destroyed. The task of rebuilding Lawrence, both physically and spiritually, fell upon Cordley's shoulders. He observed that "one saw the dead everywhere, on the sidewalks, in the streets, among the weeds in the gardens."<sup>38</sup> On the second Sunday after Quantrill's raid, August 30, 1863, Cordley held a special sermon to ease his parishioners' fears and losses. Similar to his Puritan forebears, Cordley drew upon Old Testament images and metaphors. From the Book of Isaiah, Cordley read, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a



moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." He continued his sermon by stating, "For freedom's battle, once begun, bequeathed by bleeding sire to son, though baffled oft, is ever won."<sup>39</sup> Although Lawrence remained broken, Cordley had reunited his church and reclaimed its devotion to ending slavery, despite such violent opposition. A year after Quantrill's raid, another raid similarly threatened Lawrence. On October 8, 1864, notice arrived in Lawrence that Gen. Sterling Price was marching toward Kansas with nearly 20,000 Confederate troops. Cordley noted that "I was a member of the rifle company which had been formed some months before. We had armed ourselves with repeating rifles." As a private in the Kansas state militia, Cordley was sworn to protect Lawrence from another devastating attack. However, General Price's raid was confined to Kansas City, where he was defeated.<sup>40</sup>

During his thirty-eight years as pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church in Lawrence, Cordley became known as the "nugget preacher." Whereas other noted Congregational ministers such as Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, Henry Ward Beecher, and Lyman Abbot embraced revivalist and/or extemporaneous styles during the First and Second Great Awakenings, Cordley traditionally preached in short sentences that often contained a "nugget of truth."<sup>41</sup> Cordley "saw truth, not in abstract form but in vital relation to the lives of the men to whom he was speaking."<sup>42</sup> Additionally, Cordley published numerous articles in national periodicals such as *The Christian Union*, *The Independent*, *American Messenger*, *The Congregationalist* and *Boston Recorder*, *The Christian Banner*, and *The Advance*.<sup>43</sup> After only one year as minister of Plymouth Congregational, he began *The Record*, later renamed the *Congregational Record*, the first Congregational paper in the state.

The *Congregational Record* originally began as a quarterly publication. Cordley recognized that "the establishment of a Congregational paper for Kansas has for some time been a subject of serious discussion. The Eastern pa-

pers, excellent as they are, do not, and cannot, furnish that medium of communication which our churches need."<sup>44</sup> The paper included minutes of the General Association of Kansas meetings, as well as information on various Congregational activities in Kansas and across the nation, including church statistics. In addition, the paper also carried information regarding other denominations' activities in Kansas. As editor, Cordley dreamt that this publication would become the religious periodical of the West, a paper to rival even Boston's famed *Congregational Quarterly*. Cordley noted that after its first issue appeared in April 1859, over 250 copies were ordered by various Congregational churches in the region. The cost was 50 cents a year. However, by 1862 *The Record* had not achieved Cordley's lofty hopes and began carrying advertisements similar to that of a popular magazine.<sup>45</sup> Also, *The Record* soon became a monthly instead of a quarterly publication. During Quantrill's raid in 1863, *The Record* offices were burned and all the material for publication was destroyed. By 1865 *The Record* had recovered from the attack, but it primarily published church statistics and notices. During the 1865 meeting of the General Association, the members decided to suspend publication unless additional funds could be provided by the association or from other sources. The association decided to publish *The Record* for one more year. Although the magazine continued for a few more years, it never secured enough funding to justify its long-term publication.

Cordley's missionary and New England-style reforms did not end with the failure of *The Record*. Along with the other Protestant denominations, the Congregationalists realized that education lay at the heart of missionary work and humanitarian reforms in the West. Thus, he led the way in establishing several educational institutions. Numerous Congregational schools and colleges were created throughout the American West during this period, and Congregational clergy were especially prominent in this endeavor. In

Kansas alone, the Congregationalists established a public school and university infrastructure that still exists today. Plymouth Congregational Sunday school claimed to be the first school in Kansas.<sup>46</sup> Cordley was also instrumental in establishing Lincoln College (now Washburn University) in Topeka and the University of Kansas in Lawrence. As early as 1857, the General Association had resolved that a university should be built either in Topeka or Lawrence "under the control of the General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas."<sup>47</sup> On January 25, 1865, the General Association of Congregational Churches in Kansas held a general meeting in Topeka to establish a university system within the state. Following the Puritan ideal of an "an educated clergy preaching to educated congregations," Cordley and his fellow Congregational ministers decided to build a Congregational university system to rival that of the Methodists, Roman Catholics, and Presbyterians in the state.<sup>48</sup> Earlier, in 1857-59, the General Association had met in Topeka and Lawrence to debate the best location for the university. Cordley and the other Congregationalists (later the trustees of Lincoln College) stated that "to found and endow a College is often regarded as simply *providing new facilities for the advancement of Literature*. Something *more* than this we would believe, however, possessed the minds of those who established *Harvard and Yale*. Such institutions were in their minds inseparable from a *Free Church* and a *Free State*."<sup>49</sup> Both Cordley and his minister friend Sylvester D. Storrs recognized "the danger from this quarter is enhanced from the fact that Romanism, on the one hand, and German infidelity on the other, early acquired a wide spread influence in this valley."<sup>50</sup> To counteract the influences of Catholicism and German Rationalism in Kansas, the Congregationalists demanded a "*Strong Protestant Centre of Education* that will not only aid the advancement of Science and Literature, but shall also disseminate correct ideas of civil and religious liberty."<sup>51</sup> The Kansas Congregationalists wanted to continue in the monu-

mental efforts of their Puritan forefathers regarding education. Cordley and others ended their educational declaration by proclaiming "sincere love for our country and a wise solicitude for its future peace should induce us to plant, in the first stages of its growth, such institutions in this 'seat of empire' as shall anchor it securely to the great Puritan ideas."<sup>52</sup> Cordley and his fellow Congregationalists recognized that because of eastern elitist perceptions of the American West, western ministers' efforts to establish a university would be rendered comical, if not futile. Cordley published a letter from the *Boston Journal* in the *Congregational Record* that demonstrated such attitudes:

Those are greatly privileged at the West who have the means to send their children East to be educated. But the number of such is very few, and always will be. But however superior our educational facilities may be, there are advantages inseparable from home education—that, we mean, of the neighborhood—carried among those of similar habits and modes of life, and allowing the young to be under the constant oversight of their parents. Hence the West must have its own institutions of learning.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the formulation of concrete ideas regarding a Congregational university in the state, the members of the General Association could not agree on its location.

After much discussion, Topeka was selected to house the new educational facility. However, with little financial backing, Topeka lost its bid in 1858, and Lawrence assumed control of the future university location. Under Reverend Lum, the Congregational trustees decided to build Monumental College in Lawrence as the central and prime Congregational university in the state. It was "designed to commemorate the triumph of Liberty over Slavery in Kansas, and to serve as a memorial of those who have assisted in achieving this victory."<sup>54</sup> In 1859 the trustees decided to build the university on Mount Oread (site of the



present University of Kansas). But with the Civil War breaking out, creating severe monetary constraints, the construction of Monumental was delayed. Even after a joint agreement with the Presbyterians and Episcopalians for additional funding in 1861, Monumental College never got off the ground during the war years.<sup>55</sup> However, following the Civil War, the Topeka contingent was able to raise enough money to found the Topeka Institute, or Lincoln College, which later became Washburn University on November 18, 1868, with the financial assistance of \$25,000 from Massachusetts deacon Ichabod Washburn. The Special Committee on Theological and Collegiate Education of the Congregationalists recognized their Kansas brothers' efforts as "laying the foundation of a Congregational College, which shall, on the field of its early victory, be a monument of the triumph of freedom over slavery; a memorial of that Christian emancipator whose name it bears."<sup>56</sup> Although Topeka had secured its college, Lawrence was not to be outdone. Cordley and his followers submitted a proposal to the state senate, which was passed on February 20, 1863, and on September 12, 1866, the University of Kansas finally opened its doors.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to his role as founder of two major state universities, Cordley served as a regent at Kansas State University. He was also on the Lawrence School Board for twenty years and served as its president from 1885 to 1891, and Cordley Elementary School still exists there. In 1871 Washburn elected Cordley as its president, but he declined the offer. In 1874 the University of Kansas bestowed a Doctor of Divinity degree, the first degree granted by the university, upon Cordley to honor his reform efforts and pioneer work in the field of education. However, like most Protestant denominational colleges in the West, Cordley's institutions failed to retain their Congregational affiliations. The American West, as many missionaries soon learned, was too large and sparsely populated, with various conflicting faiths, to fulfill western denominational college hopes.<sup>58</sup>

Cordley also spearheaded women's reform issues during his thirty-eight years as pastor at Plymouth Congregational. As early as 1857, Plymouth Congregational Church established the first women's organization called the Home Missionary Society. It began as a sewing society to raise money for the church by making clothing for the poor. It lasted until 1865.<sup>59</sup> In 1870 the First Pilgrim Congregational Church of Kansas City, Kansas, issued its congregational-approved constitution, which declared: "The church not only approves the female members taking an active part in the business meetings and prayer meetings, but that we consider it absolutely necessary that they should do so in order to advance their own spirituality and that of the church."<sup>60</sup> During the Second Great Awakening, Congregational revivals and renewals attracted more women than men, and "female converts in New England outnumbered men by three to two."<sup>61</sup> Additionally, in 1853 Antoinette Brown was ordained as the first female minister by the Congregational Church. Missionary wives and female ministers also served important administrative, religious, and social functions in the American West. Under Cordley's pastorate, a Ladies Social Circle was established specifically to promote the gospel. Additionally, Cordley's wife held weekly prayer meetings and services in her home for members and nonmembers. Sponsoring various lecture series, concerts, and speaking contests, Congregational women united the isolated church members and made the church their center of western religious life for hundreds of followers. In addition, the women of Plymouth Congregational desired to expand their missionary work beyond Lawrence. The American Board was involved in establishing Congregational missions to various countries, and in 1881 the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior was organized within Plymouth Church to assist the American Board's efforts. In 1884 Mrs. Cordley organized another missionary society to assist the Woman's Board and local missionary concerns.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, Cordley supported the 1887 law that granted municipal



suffrage to women. Cordley realized that women had long been the strongest supporters of temperance and prohibition, and their ability to vote on such legislation would strengthen the Congregational position for abolishing alcohol in Kansas.<sup>63</sup>

Besides missionary work among slaves and women, plus reform efforts in education and temperance, Cordley was also interested in assisting American Indians and newly arrived Chinese immigrants. An ardent liberal for his day, Cordley placed various items of poetry, interviews with Mark Twain, and sermons by noted Congregational ministers Henry Ward Beecher and Lyman Abbot in his scrapbook. One such piece was Beecher's "New Men in the New Nation: The Chinese Question" from 1879, which advocated education and reform of the horrible working conditions of Chinese immigrants in the West. Although Cordley had scarcely any contact with such immigrants, he agreed with Beecher's assessments. A more immediate concern for Cordley, however, lay with the Delaware Indian Reservations near Lawrence. When Cordley first arrived in Kansas, he traveled across the Delaware Indian Reservation to reach Lawrence and was greatly impressed with the people he met there. In a sermon at Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Cordley proclaimed, "[I]f our government will only establish and maintain schools like this, in sufficient numbers, the Indian question will soon settle itself. These children, educated, trained in useful arts, and Christianized, will go forth to a different life from that their ancestors led."<sup>64</sup> Cordley also hoped that education would end the horrible Indian wars that were plaguing the West. He was also a virulent opponent of continuing the reservation system:

[B]efore that time arrives when we must face this question, it may occur to some of our statesmen to treat the Indian with simple justice, protecting him like any other man, and giving him the same rights and opportunities as other men. The Reservation system, as it is now carried out, is cer-

tainly very near its end. Why not give each Indian his own, make him a citizen, and clothe him with all the privileges and subject him to all the conditions of other men?<sup>65</sup>

Cordley was also the forerunner of the environmental conservation and preservation movements. In 1879 he began planting shade trees throughout Lawrence and the surrounding areas for aesthetic and practical applications.<sup>66</sup>

In 1875, poor health and a general dissatisfaction with his church forced Cordley to resign his position at Plymouth Congregational and return home to Flint, Michigan. He did so, he said, for "a change of work and climate." In a letter to Plymouth Church, Cordley stated, "But when I think of the weariness with which I have labored, and how the work has increasingly pressed upon me, and must continue to do so, I feel sure the question will come up again, if even I should decide now to remain—and I shall be compelled to meet it soon, even if I put it aside now." He also noted that

I am moved to this act simply by the feeling that I cannot much longer carry safely, the load of work which must press on me here, and must seek relief in a change. I feel inexpressibly sad to think that this necessity will sever ties that have been so close and so strong, and which the changing years that have gone have only served to strengthen. Here has been my only field and my only home. Here have been my life and my thought. Whatever may be the fortunes of the future, the memory of Lawrence and Plymouth Church will never grow dim.<sup>67</sup>

Cordley remained in Michigan for three years as pastor of First Congregational Church in Flint. Then, in 1878, he returned to Kansas to become pastor at Emporia for six more years. During his stay in Emporia, the membership rose to 180 and he helped build a new church. While Cordley served in Flint and Emporia, Plymouth Congregational had two replacement ministers. Reverend Leverett W. Spring

of Massachusetts served as pastor for nearly six years, and following his resignation, Reverend George H. Scott served for three more. Then, in 1884, Cordley returned to Lawrence as pastor.<sup>68</sup>

Few nineteenth-century Congregational clerics achieved the notoriety of their eastern brethren of the same era. Mention Richard Cordley and his Andover Band, Myron Reed in Colorado, or Josiah Strong in Wyoming, and audiences will assume a puzzled, quizzical look. While few may recollect Topeka Congregationalist Charles M. Sheldon for his famed *In His Steps* and "What Would Jesus Do" social gospel message, western clerics as a whole have been marginalized in American religious history. Lyman Beecher, Charles Grandison Finney, and Henry Ward Beecher achieved national notoriety as Congregational reformers in the nineteenth century. Yet, despite Cordley's efforts and those of other clerics in the Great Plains, they still remain as footnotes in the canon of western history and its mythic legends. Why? Although some have achieved recognition in regional, state, and local histories, clerics, unlike the generic cowboy hero or villain, simply cannot be universalized, but are understood solely in denominational terms. These denominational classifications have limited the minister's role in the pantheon of western stereotyped figures and situations that dominate popular culture adaptations in novels, film, and television.<sup>69</sup> But if the western clerics never achieved the name recognition of their eastern brothers, their ability to adapt the national, urban social gospel message to a more localized, rural setting is still apparent in the educational impact and cultural influence of New England. But even Cordley realized the dilemma of transplanting New England religion to the American West. In an 1884 publication, he stated:

Western churches differ. Some are as quiet in their tastes as any New England parish, while others require a boisterous style, which would fill the most extreme conception of Western Eloquence. . . . You will find every type of

society in the West. There are whole sections which are New England over again, and often, as some one has said, "more like New England than New England herself." "They stand alone; modern degeneracy has not reached them." So, in the Interior, Eastern Ohio has the New England stamp and ways, while Southern Ohio received its color from Pennsylvania and the South. Elsewhere, other elements are mixed. So the religious condition of the West varies with localities. . . . When we speak of "the West," we speak of an immense region, with an endless variety of country and an endless variety of people. There is room for all the diverse stories of destitution and ignorance, the stories of sudden wealth and successful culture.<sup>70</sup>

Richard Cordley served as pastor of Plymouth Congregational for thirty-eight years. On his last sermon at Plymouth, he needed assistance to reach the pulpit. Cordley had contracted a "creeping paralysis" (perhaps Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis) during the last years of his life. On July 11, 1904, he died at age seventy-five. At his memorial service, fellow Congregationalist Samuel A. Riggs stated, "[O]f the men, young, vigorous and strong, who came then, no one has made a deeper and more enduring impression upon Lawrence and the State than Richard Cordley."<sup>71</sup> He proclaimed the gospel in Kansas, established a very successful Congregational presence in the state that guaranteed the abolition of slavery, the freedom and welfare of American Indians, the promotion of women's rights, and helped build the infrastructure of the modern-day educational system that still flourishes. Lawrence, unlike other Kansas and Great Plains towns, still reflects New England architecture, town layout and street names, and an eastern, aristocratic elitism that is manifested in attitudes toward the state and the Great Plains, and vice versa. On his deathbed, Cordley said, "I shall never preach again to my people in Plymouth Church. I have tried to do them good. I should like to preach to them again, but it is all right."<sup>72</sup>

## NOTES

The author thanks Professors Ferenc Morton Szasz, Paul Andrew Hutton, and Raymond Wilson for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript.

1. For a review of the hero concept and myth as a theoretical approach to the American West, see Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1950); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); Richard Slatta, *Comparing Cowboys and Frontiers: New Perspectives on the History of the Americas* (Norman, Red River Books, 1997); Richard W. Etulain, *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), and *Re-Imagining the Modern American West: A Century of Fiction, History, and Art* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996); Paul Hutton, *Hunter Heroes: Boone and Crockett and Hunter Heroes: Carson and Cody* (History Channel Productions, 2000-2002). Although these important monographs and television productions extol the power of the western hero on American society and have revised the historical interpretations of the American West, the role of the clergy is unfortunately absent.

2. Many excellent articles and monographs have analyzed the transplant of New England culture to the Great Plains and Trans-Mississippi West. Gunja SenGupta, "A Model New England State: Northeastern Antislavery in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860," *Civil War History* 39 (March 1993): 31-46, "Servants for Freedom: Christian Abolitionists in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1858," *Kansas History* 16 (Autumn 1993): 200-213, and *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Jeffrey Adler, "Yankee Colonizers and the Making of Antebellum St. Louis," *Gateway Heritage* 12, no. 3 (1992): 4-19. While SenGupta's and Adler's works are quite useful for a theoretical foundation, their main focus on cultural imperialism is limited to either territorial Kansas during the Civil War or St. Louis in the pre-Civil War era. Similarly, Lewis P. Simpson's "Slavery and the Cultural Imperialism of New England," *Southern Review* 25 (Winter 1989): 1-29, through a literary theoretical focus

on colonial-antebellum writers on slavery, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and slavery-defender George Fitzhugh, argues that proponents of New England cultural superiority did not reinforce American nationalism in opposition to the agrarian, slave-based Southern economy, but sought "to imprint the American nation with the indelible stamp of New England culture."

3. Quoted in Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 108.

4. Quoted in Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West, 1865-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 13.

5. Quoted in Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 32.

6. Charles M. Correll, *A Century of Congregationalism in Kansas, 1854-1954* (Topeka: Kansas Congregational and Christian Conference, 1953), 12.

7. By 1893 the Congregational Home Missionary Society had established 6,121 churches and had nearly 2,002 missionaries. Williston Walker, *History of the Congregational Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894), 315, 317, 329; Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier, With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (New York: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1939).

8. *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 2, 1954. Plymouth Congregational File, Douglas County Historical Society, Lawrence, Kans. (hereafter DCHS).

9. Richard Cordley, *Pioneer Days* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1903), 8.

10. *Ibid.*, 9.

11. *Ibid.*, 23.

12. Richard B. Sheridan, *Historic Plymouth Congregational Church and the Reverend Richard Cordley, D.D.* Plymouth Congregational Church booklet in pastor's possession. n.d.

13. Ruth Althaus, *Richard Cordley: A Short History of His Life, 1829-1904*, Reverend Richard Cordley File, DCHS.

14. Hill P. Wilson, *A Biographical History of Eminent Men of the State of Kansas* (Topeka: Hall Lithographing Company, 1901), 261; Richard Cordley, "The Kansas Andover Band," *The Home Missionary* 3 (January 1901): 187.

15. Wm. L. Burdick, "An Appreciation," in *Sermons of Richard Cordley, For Thirty-Eight Years Pastor of Plymouth Church, Lawrence, Kansas* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1912), x.

16. Richard Cordley, *Quarter Centennial Sermon 1857-75 and 1884-91* (Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, 1891), 2, Richard Cordley Manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka (hereafter KSHS).



17. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, 12.
18. Wilson, *Biographical History*, 11, 24, 25; Dorothy Jones, *First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) Topeka, Kansas, 1855-1980* (Topeka: n.p., 1980), 3.
19. *Ibid.*, 70.
20. S.Y. Lum, "Kansas General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches," *Congregational Record*, 1859-1867; Minutes from Topeka, April 25-27, 1857, KSHS.
21. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, 70-80.
22. *Congregational Record* 2, no. 1 (January 1860): 3-4.
23. *Congregational Record* 1, no. 1 (January 1859): 2.
24. Clipping Book compiled by Mary Cordley (1872-1892). Richard Cordley Manuscript Collection, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, RH MS D131 (hereafter cited as Spencer Research Library).
25. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, 57-58.
26. *Ibid.*, 80.
27. Adoption Record of Margaret Jones (Margaret Cordley), Reverend Richard Cordley File, DCHS; Sheridan, *Historic Plymouth Congregational*, 2. There is a dispute here. The adoption record lists the year as 1875; however, Maggie was listed as living with the Cordleys during Quantrill's raid in 1863. There are three possible scenarios. First, the adoption paper date is incorrect. Second, Maggie was with the Cordleys in 1863, but not as an officially adopted child. Finally, the adoption record was not written at the time of the official adoption, but after the fact.
28. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, 92.
29. *Congregational Record* 4, no. 4 (April 1862): 48.
30. *Congregational Record* 4, no. 6 (June 1862): 68.
31. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 185-88, 123-25; "Statistics," *Congregational Quarterly* 5 (January 1863): 94; 6 (January 1864): 98; 7 (January 1865): 100; 8 (January 1866): 101; 9 (January 1867): 96; 10 (January 1868): 104; 11 (January 1869): 185, KSHS.
32. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 123; *Plymouth Congregational Church, 60th Anniversary 1854-1914*, Plymouth Congregational File, DCHS.
33. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 123.
34. *Ibid.*, 125.
35. *Ibid.*, 24.
36. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, 211.
37. Thomas Goodrich, *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), 114.
38. Richard Cordley, *History of Lawrence, Kansas, from the Earliest Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion* (Lawrence: Lawrence Journal Press, 1895), 239.
39. Cordley, *Pioneer Days*, n.p.
40. Cordley, *Quarter Centennial Sermon, 1857-75 and 1884-91*, 14, Cordley Manuscripts, KSHS.
41. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 25; Wilson, *Biographical History*, 261.
42. James G. Dougherty, "Rev. Richard Cordley, D.D.," in *Memorial Volume: Being Historical Papers Read at the General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas, Semi-Centennial Session, Lawrence, Kansas, June 14-18, 1904*, Cordley Manuscripts, KSHS.
43. Sheridan, *Historic Plymouth Congregational*, 5.
44. *Congregational Record* 1, no. 1 (January 1859): 1-2.
45. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 88-89.
46. Leon C. Schnacke, "Congregationalism and Education in Kansas," in *Memorial Volume*, Cordley Manuscripts, KSHS.
47. *Congregational Record* 1, no. 1 (January 1859): 14.
48. Correll, *Century of Congregationalism*, 73.
49. "Design of the Founders," quoted in Roy Bird, *Washburn Through the Years* (Topeka, Kans.: Washburn University, 1997), 11.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Congregational Record* 2, no. 1 (January 1860): 15.
54. *Congregational Record* 1, no. 3 (July 1859): 45.
55. C.S. Griffin, "University of Kansas and the Years of Frustration, 1854-1864," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (Spring 1966): 1-32.
56. "Lincoln College," *Congregational Quarterly* 7 (July and October 1865): 410.
57. Virginia Adams, *On the Hill: A Photographic History of the University of Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 13-15; H.D. Rice, "Reminiscences Read before the Congregational Pioneer Society of Topeka," Western Collection, Forsyth Library, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kans.
58. Szasz, *Protestant Clergy*, 59.
59. Plymouth Congregational File, DCHS.
60. Don B. Ballou, *Pilgrim Heritage: First Pilgrim Congregational Church of Kansas City, Kansas, 1858-1958*, church pamphlet (Callender Printing, 1958), 7.
61. Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 27.
62. Plymouth Congregational File, DCHS.
63. Richard Cordley, "Woman Suffrage and Prohibition in Kansas," *The Congregationalists and Boston Recorder*, April 21, 1887, and Abbie E. Noyes Raymond, "The Ladies Social Circle," Cordley Manuscripts, KSHS.

64. Richard Cordley Manuscript Collection, Spencer Research Library.

65. "The Indian Territory," *The Advance*, March 4, 1880, Spencer Research Library.

66. Samuel A. Riggs, "Address at Service in Memory of Rev. Richard Cordley, D.D., November 20, 1904," Riggs Manuscripts, KSHS.

67. Cordley Resignation from Plymouth Congregational Church, Miscellaneous Clippings, 1875, Cordley Manuscripts, KSHS.

68. Wilson, *Biographical History*, 263; Sheridan, *Historic Plymouth Congregational*, 4, 25, 26.

69. Private conversation with Dr. Ferenc Morton Szasz, Spring 2004, Albuquerque, N.M.

70. "Diversities of the West," *The Advance*, February 21, 1884, Spencer Research Library.

71. Riggs, "Address," Riggs Manuscripts, KSHS.

72. Sheridan, *Historic Plymouth Congregational*, 4; S. Alford, "A Modern Apostle," *The Congregationalist and the Christian World*, July 1904, 116.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000.* Edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. 390 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

This collection chronicles the longstanding and diverse experiences of African American women across the regional West through a series of essays by leading western historians. Together, they bring new depth to a subject often ignored. On issues ranging from race relations to labor relations and from working-class as well as upper-class perspectives, the volume carefully reconstructs and considers the role of black women in varied western contexts.

Arranged chronologically, the collection's essays hold together well. The editors' introduction situates the pieces that follow in relation to western, African American, and women's historiographies. Peppered with short and appropriate primary documents related to the surrounding essays, the book insures that black women from the past speak for themselves. Especially useful pieces for GPQ readers include Debra S. McDonald's "To Be Black and Female in the Spanish Southwest," Peggy Riley's "Women of the Great Falls African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870-1910," Susan Armitage's "'The Mountains Were Free and We Loved Them': Dr. Ruth Flowers of Boulder, Colorado," Moya B. Hansen's "Try

Being a Black Woman!': Jobs in Denver, 1900-1970," Cheryl Brown Henderson's "Lucinda Todd and the Invisible Petitioners of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas," and Linda Williams Reese's "Clara Luper and the Civil Rights Movement in Oklahoma City."

As the title suggests, the editors and contributors make a clear analytical claim. In each of the pieces, African American women—regardless of particular circumstance—found that race in combination with gender proved the most important facet of their western experience. Consistently tackling racism and sexism with self-sacrifice and self-confidence, they not only contributed to western history but also shaped it through their individual confrontations. That so many of the essays resort to biography suggests the source limitations confronted—and transcended—by these historians as well as the work that remains to be done in this crucial subfield.

All told, the book succeeds in highlighting and reiterating the significance of African American women in western history. As the collection's chronological scope suggests, these women did not suddenly appear on the western scene at any given moment—they were in the thick of the region's most crucial dynamics from the beginning.

MICHAEL LANSING  
*Western Historical Quarterly*  
Utah State University



*Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*. Edited by Rita Napier. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. viii + 416 pp. Photographs, figures, notes, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

It's hard to travel the highways and byways of the Great Plains saga without spending some time in Kansas.

Conquistadors and cowboys, Indians and Exodusters—to say nothing of such luminaries in the pantheon of popular culture as Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickok, and Buffalo Bill Cody—join the intricate weave of the historical tapestry of Kansas. Frequently glanced at as a “passing through” place, Kansas is more accurately perceived as a locale where regions and peoples meet, mingle, and merge. It is, after all, in Kansas that watered prairies taper off into vast Plains where Dust Bowl nightmares linger. This complex place and its complex history receive the attention of the twenty authors whose nineteen essays are brought together in *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*.

Editor Rita Napier evenly groups the collected articles into three temporal categories: “Native Americans, Dispossession, and Resettlement”; “Kansas in the Nineteenth Century: From ‘Bleeding Kansas’ to Modernity”; and “Twentieth-Century Kansas.” Topics range from Richard White’s “The Cultural Landscape of the Pawnees” to Thomas Frank’s “The Leviathan with Tentacles of Steel: Railroads in the Minds of Kansas Populists” and Donald Worster’s “The Dirty Thirties: A Study of Agricultural Capitalism.” Along the way, the reader encounters such diverse subjects as the Prairie Potawatomes’ resistance to allotment; ethnic German communities; segregated schools; Mexican immigration; and the restructuring of the beefpacking industry. Although arranged chronologically, these articles also hone in on certain key themes: environment; cultural adaptation; race; class; economic development; the nature of work; ethnicity; and diversity.

Rather than presenting a vision of a simple agrarian society evolving in measured steps into a more complex construct, this book’s

contributors provide invaluable insight into a more subtle, uncertain, and provocative vision. As Napier writes in her astute and informative introductory essay, “Kansas history has not always been a story of progress, but careful analysis will let us distinguish more carefully between what we can praise and what we need to correct. This new knowledge has yarn of many colors with which to weave our future.”

*Kansas and the West* stands as an excellent example for how to go about the task of revisiting what once seemed such familiar ground, but which, upon reflection, cries out for further exploration and illumination.

RON MCCOY

Department of Social Sciences  
Emporia State University

*Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890*. By Gregory F. Michno. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003. xxxv + 439 pp. Photographs, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, indexes. \$28.00.

Despite steady interest in the wars on the American frontier during the last half of the nineteenth century, few historians have examined those conflicts as a coherent whole. The multitude of Native American tribes involved, the small scale of most battles, and the myriad details of each war have made them better suited for tightly focused monographs, while the hundreds of brief and inconsequential skirmishes that represented the bulk of the fighting have been ignored or scarcely mentioned. Happily, this gap in the historiography has finally been filled by Gregory F. Michno’s *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890*, an easy to use, detailed reference work that will delight both specialists and general readers interested in the American West.

Michno’s work concisely summarizes 675 battles and skirmishes in nineteen states and three Mexican provinces between Native

Americans and US military or civilian forces between 1850 and 1890. Summaries are arranged in chronological order and supported by extensive endnotes referencing primary and secondary sources. Michno also includes an extensive assortment of maps detailing the location of every battle and skirmish in every state and province mentioned in the text.

Readers will find extensive coverage of battles on the Great Plains, a wide assortment of photographs, direct quotations that add color to key entries, tables, appendices, a bibliography, an excellent index, and a final thought-provoking chapter titled "Conclusions" which summarizes Michno's views on the nature of frontier warfare. Among his more interesting conclusions are that the number of US Army winter attacks actually decreased after 1865, and that the frontier, despite revisionist assertions, was an extremely violent place where at least 21,586 people were killed, captured, or wounded in action between 1850 and 1890.

As with all encyclopedias, the quality of the writing and evidence varies from one entry to another, and Michno is perhaps too sanguine about the reliability of his sources, most of which come from the US Army. Entries do not include commentary and make no allowance for importance. Readers seeking more than a factual overview of any particular engagement, therefore, will have to look elsewhere.

Yet these are minor criticisms. Michno's goal in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars* is to provide an accurate reference tool for scholars and general readers alike, and he succeeds admirably, rescuing hundreds of almost-forgotten encounters to their place in the history of the wars on the frontier. His work will be a valuable resource to specialists and an interesting introduction to American frontier warfare for the foreseeable future.

LANCE JANDA

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*Children's Voices from the Trail: Narratives of the Platte River Road.* By Rosemary Gudmundson Palmer. Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2002. 336 pp. Map, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index. \$39.50

Between 1850 and 1869, some 350,000 pioneers crossed the Great Plains, following the Platte River Road from the Missouri River to South Pass, Wyoming, and on to California and Oregon. Others made the trek to Utah, Colorado, or Montana. This book tells the story of the crossing of the Plains from the viewpoint of children—one fifth of the participants in the great overland journeys. Palmer lets their voices be heard.

The author analyzes the eye-witness accounts of 453 white children who traveled on the Platte River road's Oregon, California, and Mormon trails between 1841 and 1869. Her unique contribution to the literature on the overland trail is twofold: she provides a comparison of the similarities and differences between contemporary accounts of ten- to sixteen-year-old youngsters (in diaries, letters, and journals) with reminiscences of adults who made the journey when they were young, and she places these travelers' stories in the proper historical context. Her account focuses on the attitudes, expectations, and values that prevailed in mid-nineteenth-century society and that motivated the participants in the westward migration.

Palmer examines the youngsters' vision of the journey from several perspectives: their descriptions of their travels on the overland trail; their relationships with parents and siblings; their interactions with other members of the wagon train; and their perceptions of friends or potential foes encountered along the way. Generally, children judged people they had not previously met (Mormons, Native Americans) less harshly than their adult counterparts. Endowed with youthful resilience, most remained optimistic despite the hardships of the journey and the loss of family members.

In the future, Palmer suggests, we also need to examine the views of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American children of the Westward Migration, a reminder that different travelers may see the same events in a different light. Her book is a valuable addition to our present knowledge of the world of children on the overland trail.

EMMY E. WERNER

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*Galvanized Yankees on the Upper Missouri: The Face of Loyalty.* By Michele Tucker Butts. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003. xiv + 292 pp. Photographs, map, illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Visitors to Fort Rice State Historic Site have little idea of the drama that took place there during the first few years after its construction in 1864. The site's historical marker contains no mention of the important task rendered by former Confederate soldiers who became known as "the Galvanized Yankees."

*Galvanized Yankees on the Upper Missouri: The Face of Loyalty* provides a much needed remedy. The book studies one particular unit, the six companies of the First US Volunteer Infantry, made up primarily of Confederate prisoners of war, and its subsequent service at Fort Rice, Dakota Territory. Readers will leave the volume better appreciating the complexities of leadership, of upheaval in people's lives, of the struggle to survive in harsh circumstances and environments, and, ultimately, how all this contributed to post-Civil War "nation building."

The interesting background analysis of the Confederate POWs who "volunteered" for this service is narrated in chapter 2, supplemented by the "spreadsheet" shown in appendix 1, information crucial to the book's real point: that an examination of the history of the First

US Volunteer Infantry yields a better understanding of "the face of loyalty."

Michele Tucker Butts describes the multiplicity of issues with which this unit of volunteers contended on the Great Plains of Dakota Territory, including the aftermath of the battles at Whitestone Hill and Killdeer Mountain. Proof is provided that the conflict of ideas and upheaval of lives during this period was shared by both Caucasians and Native Americans. This reader was particularly interested in the material concerning Two Bears, in the wake of the battle at Whitestone Hill, now a State Historic Site.

The "galvanized yankees" contended with Indian attacks and depredations, dealt with disease, scurvy, near starvation, bitter cold winter weather, a sweltering summer, lack of communication with loved ones, and a myriad of other problems, yet also enjoyed recreational diversions. Using accounts gleaned from soldier letters and the newspaper *Frontier Scout*, Butts contends that all of these experiences played a significant role in the settlement of the West.

VANCE E. NELSON

State Historical Society of North Dakota

*Kit Carson and His Three Wives: A Family History.* By Marc Simmons. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. x + 195 pp. Map, photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.

This examination of Kit Carson's family life goes a long way toward correcting the "monster image" of the famous frontiersman that has held sway with revisionist historians in the last three decades. Because his life as a mountain man, soldier, and Indian agent seemed to represent the worst of American colonialism, a number of writers have delighted in branding him as an ethnocentric villain of the West. Marc Simmons, among other current writers such as Tom Dunlay, Robert Utley, Harvey Carter, and David Roberts, believes



these images are erroneous when viewed in the light of historical evidence. In this case, Simmons has focused on Carson's personal relationship with his three wives (and children) to portray him as a caring and devoted man. Although the lives of these women are obscure, the author's careful research has produced an enjoyable and persuasive work.

Carson married an Arapaho woman, Waa-Nibe, while still hunting on the Plains. Their loving and Native-styled union lasted three years before Waa-Nibe died after childbirth. The next marriage, a loveless one to Making-Out-Road (Cheyenne), ended in little over a year. In 1843 Carson united with Josefa Jaramillo, the young daughter of a noted Taos family. This marriage, though marked by Carson's long absences in government service, proved a strong and lasting one, ending only with the death of both in 1868. Simmons views Carson's three wives as distinct individuals, but his real focus is on Carson's personality. As a result, there is only a brief nod to his more controversial activities such as his exploits as a mountain man and as John C. Frémont's guide, and his role in the Navajo Removal and as a representative of the Indian Office.

Simmons's research is outstanding: Despite a lack of hard facts related to his subjects, he has thoroughly examined the existing Carson literature, original records, newspaper stories, and government documents. Nonetheless, there is so little information (on the first two wives in particular) that there must be considerable speculation. As was the fashion of the times, Carson's own memoirs say nothing about his personal feelings or anything else about his partners. The best one can do is to draw inferences based on what someone would logically feel or do in similar situations. While a reasonable approach, it is used to such an extent that readers may question the validity of some claims. Simmons, for instance, firmly maintains that Carson desired to live a strong family life with Josefa. His actions, however, seem to indicate otherwise.

That aside, Simmons's study adds much to the Carson literature and helps dispel some of the more vogueish criticism of the man.

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*Morning Star Dawn: The Powder River Expedition and the Northern Cheyennes, 1876.* By Jerome A. Greene. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xvi + 288 pp. Photographs, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

In November 1876, Colonel Ranald Mackenzie led a successful attack on a Northern Cheyenne village in the Bighorn Mountains. In military historian Jerome Greene's rendering, this often overlooked battle and the ephemeral Powder River Expedition became a seminal event in ending the Sioux Wars of 1876-77. "The attack on the encampment and its subsequent destruction," Greene writes, "not only compelled the Cheyennes' eventual surrender but also influenced many of their Lakota compatriots, including the war leader Crazy Horse, to do likewise."

The Powder River Expedition was part of Lieutenant General Phillip Sheridan's "disarm and dismount" policy. Army officials confiscated reservation Indians' horses and guns, while attempting to force so-called "hostiles" to come to reservations. Brigadier General George Crook led the Powder River Expedition to accomplish the latter of those objectives. Crook commanded members of the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Cavalries and Pawnee, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Lakota scouts. He initially targeted Crazy Horse's followers, but decided to attack Morning Star's Cheyennes after Indian scouts discovered their camp in the Bighorn Mountains. On the morning of November 25, 1876, braving freezing temperatures, the cavalry units—led into battle by Mackenzie—and Indian scouts attacked the Cheyenne and forced them to retreat from their

winter camp. As Cheyenne men, women, and children escaped through the hills, the soldiers burned their lodges, ammunition, clothes, and food stores. This was the only engagement for Crook's soldiers. In January 1877, poor weather and expenses prevented the Army from chasing Morning Star and forced Crook to return to Fort Fetterman. Still, this small battle succeeded in its intended goals. When the refugees entered the camps of their Lakota and Cheyenne allies, they strained already scarce resources. That spring, Morning Star and other Cheyennes came into Camp Robinson, and Crazy Horse followed in May.

*Morning Star Dawn* is a vividly detailed history of the short but apparently effective Powder River Expedition. Greene provides ample and meticulous details on the Army's movements, the type and quantity of clothing the soldiers wore, even the fact that their canteens froze solid during the expedition. The bulk of the book, however, is written from the perspective of the US Army. For instance, Greene devotes twenty pages to the maneuverings of the army during their attack, but only eight based on Cheyenne accounts of the battle. A more balanced perspective integrating Cheyenne and Army sources would have provided a richer, more complex understanding of Plains warfare.

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*Taking Indian Lands: The Cherokee (Jerome) Commission, 1889-1893.* By William T. Hagan. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. x + 279 pp. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

William T. Hagan's latest book examines the negotiations between the federal government and specific tribes in Indian Territory over the sale of tribal lands and the allotment of individual Indians. Encroachment by settlers presented a major incentive for

the federal government to complete these transactions expeditiously. Settlers as well as speculators applied significant pressure to organize Oklahoma into a territory and open the Cherokee Outlet. In response, on March 2, 1889, Congress passed an act creating the Cherokee Commission to negotiate the sale of lands by the Cherokees, Iowas, Pawnees, Poncas, Tonakawas, Wichitas, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Sac and Fox, Potawatomis, Shawnees, and Kickapoos.

As Hagan makes clear, the "Cherokee Commission was many things, but a blessing to the tribes, it was not." Employing variety of primary sources, including remaining transcripts from the Commission's proceedings, Hagan examines the Commission's negotiations and tactics and concludes that "coercion and duress" were used to strong-arm most of the tribes, particularly remnants of the Midwestern and Plains tribes, into accepting allotments and receiving payments for the remaining portions of their lands.

A major strength of Hagan's book is his examination of the interaction between the Cherokee Commission and the Cherokee Tribe. One of the primary goals of the Commission was to acquire the Cherokee Outlet, which comprised the lands between the 96th and 100th meridians, an area highly desired by settlers and businessmen but one that provided the Cherokee Tribe with a considerable income through leases made with cattlemen. Hagan depicts the Cherokees as a formidable opponent who refused to be coerced by the Commission into blindly giving away their Outlet. They tried to negotiate the best deal for themselves because they understood the inevitability of westward expansion.

Hagan's examination of the Cherokee Commission offers readers a further understanding of the dichotomies in the ward-guardian relationship that plagued US Indian policy from the early nineteenth century. The author points out that the federal government completely ignored its "obligation in the face of unrelenting pressure from white land seekers and businessmen." Recognizing that settlers

would continue to expand onto the seemingly underutilized Central Plains, Hagan concludes that any government responsive to its constituents would struggle and probably fail to ensure tribal control over such a vast amount of undeveloped land. That said, Hagan is critical of the government's tactics of using coercion and force to acquire the land at a price well below market value.

Hagan has written a well-crafted, readable book that explores the actions of a Commission not previously examined so thoroughly by historians. His use of primary sources is extensive. This effort to detail events in the Cherokee Commission's history so completely is no small feat. Hagan provides an unbiased assessment of the Commission; however, the overriding conclusion for the reader must be that the Commission was "less than ethical" in dealing with tribes and Indians who stood in a seemingly untenable position.

Hagan's latest work continues his legacy of providing important contributions to the history of westward expansion into the Great Plains region.

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National Archives and Records Administration  
Washington, DC

*One Woman's Political Journey: Kate Barnard and Social Reform, 1875-1930.* By Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xii + 231 pp. \$34.95.

Kate Barnard was elected Oklahoma's first commissioner of charities and corrections in 1907. The first woman in the country elected to a major statewide office, she remains Oklahoma's most famous woman politician. Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford have written a definitive biography of this western progressive and her reform efforts.

Born in Nebraska in 1875, Barnard moved with her father to Oklahoma in 1889. As a

young woman she became interested in social justice issues and worked for the territorial legislature, then directed a charity. Barnard saw Oklahoma's preparation for statehood in 1907 as a great opportunity and traveled to St. Louis, Chicago, and Denver to find the best examples of progressive reform legislation. She also worked with farmers, labor, and Democrats to ensure that her progressive ideas became planks in the new Oklahoma constitution.

In the state's first election, Barnard ran for commissioner of charities and corrections. Thirty-two years old, petite, beautiful, and unmarried, she had a flair for publicity, and her campaign appearances were wildly popular. A passionate speaker, she was elected overwhelmingly.

During her first term, the legislature passed Barnard's proposals regarding child labor, compulsory school attendance, and juvenile courts. She launched investigations into abusive conditions in asylums, orphanages, and jails, including abuses in the Kansas penitentiary that held Oklahoma prisoners on contract. Barnard's reputation spread, and she was heralded nationally as a champion of the underprivileged. Easily re-elected in 1910, she began to investigate Indian land frauds involving white guardians and courts that deprived Indians of valuable property rights. This effort met fierce legislative opposition and her appropriations were cut off. The state's newspapers began to ignore or criticize her. Barnard's health, always frail, worsened. She was often absent from her office, traveling, lecturing, and recuperating out of state. She did not run for reelection in 1914.

Unsuccessful in continuing her advocacy, Barnard struggled with deteriorating physical and mental health. She died alone at the age of fifty-four and for years was largely forgotten in Oklahoma history. Fortunately, interest in Barnard has recently been rekindled, and now Musslewhite and Crawford have furthered her re-emergence with a well-researched, incisive volume that describes her place in the progressive movement.



The authors point out that many of Barnard's strategies were typical of progressives of her day. In her passionate belief that government should be an instrument to protect women, children, the handicapped, and the poor, she resembled other politically active women in the early twentieth century. But she also differed from typical women progressives. She was never a strong supporter of women's suffrage and did not forge the important alliances with suffragists and women's organizations that helped sustain progressive reforms in other states. She preferred partisan politics and usually worked directly with legislators.

Kate Barnard is one of the most fascinating politicians in Oklahoma history. Musslewhite and Crawford present her story in vivid detail for historians and general readers alike.

LINDA EDMONDSON  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Down and Out on the Family Farm: Rural Rehabilitation in the Great Plains, 1929-1945.* By Michael Johnston Grant. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xi + 233 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 paper.

Anyone who loves the Great Plains and the life that took root there in the nineteenth century has had to face in recent years the decline and disappearance of that rural world. The Great Depression and the drought years of the 1930s were a key turning point in the evolution of farming on the Plains and helped set the stage for the long-term restructuring of farm life that has gone on there ever since. In *Down and Out on the Family Farm: Rural Rehabilitation in the Great Plains, 1929-1945*, Michael Grant provides a clear and concise economic history of the region. He believes that the trend toward efficient, larger scale, mechanized farming was largely inevitable, given the commercial orientation of most Plains farmers, and does not condemn those

farmers who bought out floundering neighbors. The farmers who expanded—and the organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, that supported them—merely applied their business ideology to the circumstances. “If there is a culprit in the story,” Grant writes, “it is the proclivity of Americans like the plains farmers to favor opportunity over their own security.” His work focuses on the so-called “borderline” farmers, families making \$500-\$1000 per year and struggling to move up and enjoy a better standard of living. These were the farmers for whom federal rehabilitation programs such as the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration were created.

Grant provides detailed overviews of the economics prevailing on the Plains prior to 1929, the issue of farm tenancy, and the Hoover years. The core of the book, however, explains New Deal programs as they applied to Great Plains farmers. The New Dealers initially provided help through direct relief programs or work projects. Troubled Plains farmers needed more, however, and the Resettlement Administration (1935), and the Farm Security Administration which followed it, arrived with plans to help farmers adapt. These brought mixed results, focusing as they did on subsistence farming in a region where entrepreneurial values flourished. Once rain and higher prices returned, Plains farmers chafed against the “balanced farming,” “balanced income” rehabilitation approach. Opportunity trumped security.

*Down and Out on the Family Farm* provides a fine overview of Plains economic issues and of the conflicts that arose between regional values and federal programs. There are no demons here, just a complex mixture of aspiring farmers, government, drought, and hard times. For those interested in knowing more about today's Plains farm crisis, this book is an excellent introduction.

PAULA M. NELSON  
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University of Wisconsin-Platteville

*On the Farm Front: The Women's Land Army in World War II.* By Stephanie A. Carpenter. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003. viii + 214 pp. Photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.

The Women's Land Army (WLA), which coordinated the placement of hundreds of thousands of women on farms, ranches, and crop-processing facilities during World War II, provided women with patriotic work and farms with needed labor. The subject deserves comprehensive study to reveal this important segment of women's activities on the home front during the war.

Historian Stephanie Carpenter argues that women's wartime work in farm fields "changed the way the nation viewed the permanent farm labor force." Though farmers in large sections of the country at first refused to hire women, they ultimately had to give in as the lack of male workers threatened to reduce their harvests. Carpenter demonstrates that hesitant farmers became convinced that even young, urban women could work long days at hard, dirty field and barn tasks with their hands or with machinery. She notes that this resistance was regional and in many states women workers were accepted with no hesitation.

Lacking historic perspective on the role of women in agriculture, Carpenter cannot convince this reader that the changes were permanent. She rests her argument on shifting evidence—from questions about urban women as seasonal or year-round farm workers (a major concern for Florence Hall, WLA administrator), to farm wives who "helped out" as needed, to women who managed their own farms. Other histories of women in agriculture have shown that the nature of women's farm work is driven by economics and socially constructed gender concerns—tools Carpenter does not apply to her study.

As Carpenter points out, racism was another inhibiting force, one that was not modified or even temporarily overcome in the South. Carpenter's treatment of racist and segregationist social and economic structures

lacks sensitivity to the pervasive power of Southern racism and the role of white gender concepts that supported it.

Carpenter's book is a source of basic information about the WLA, but it lacks serious analysis. Did farmers resist hiring WLA volunteers because of the crops they raised, the use or lack of machinery, social constructions of gender (male and female) in a particular region, urban/rural divisions, or a sense that the farm family did not want to risk having urban women remark on their ways of life? Carpenter neglects to reveal negative comments by WLA workers and administrators about the program and individual farmers. Readers will wonder if WLA workers were abused or mistreated. Surprisingly, Carpenter did not interview any former WLA workers whose voices would have strengthened the study and made it more than a recitation of government sources.

BARBARA HANDY-MARCHELLO  
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University of North Dakota

*Around the Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era.* By James Treat. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 376 pp. Map, photographs, notes, index. \$35.00.

This important book details the continent-wide, including Great Plains, efforts of Native Americans in the 1970s and 1980s to revive and unify Native spirituality and bring it to terms with Christianity. The subtitle alerts us that these efforts were largely overshadowed by more militant "Red Power" movements.

James Treat's conscious methodological decision, discussed in his prologue, to use a "discursive," "relational," "dialogical," "reflective" approach rather than a "rational," "linear" one makes for engaging reading. Sixty-three pages of endnotes provide the scholarly references.

The book is divided symmetrically into three parts. "Conversations," the middle,

single-chapter, main focus section highlights the first "Indian Ecumenical Conference" in August 1970, at the Crow Agency in south-eastern Montana. The events, personalities, and concerns leading up to the conference are detailed in the four chapters of the first section, "Contexts." "Consequences," the four-chapter final section, presents the conference's results as well as accounts of the changing and diminishing subsequent annual conferences.

The "Contexts" chapters provide a history of early attempts at intertribal traditional awakenings from the 1940s to the 1960s, culminating in calls for the traditionalist movement to be grounded in intertribal Native religious unity and reconciliation with Christianity. This set the stage for Bob Thomas and eight other Native religious leaders to plan and stage the first "Indian Ecumenical Conference" described in the "Conversations" section. Spelling out the conference's purpose, Thomas stated that "Native Indian religionists, of all Christian and aboriginal sects, must assemble and start the painful process of conceptually sewing together their fragmented sacred world, so that Indians can once again take steps to act for their own future."

This first conference, and the second one in 1971 at Stoney Reserve in Alberta, carried out Thomas's intention. The 1971 conference started the "sacred fire" spiritual tradition, which became the conferences' metaphor. The "Consequences" section traces the subsequent fifteen conferences, with hiatuses between 1983-87 and 1988-92, and their gradual decline to the "small gathering" in 1992 attended by the author. Already during the 1973 and 1974 conferences problems had arisen. Intergenerational, environmental, and political issues began to overshadow religious ecumenism. Anti-Christian and militant elements increased. In June 1974, Thomas resigned from further involvement because of this departure from the original focus. Funding eventually dried up from both church and governmental sources.

Treat's sympathetic exposition doesn't provide for much critical comment. One won-

ders, finally, whether Thomas's original purpose for the conferences wasn't an impossible order.

FRANCIS GUTH

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Algoma University College

*A Great Plains Reader*. Edited by Diane D. Quantic and P. Jane Hafen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xxii + 730 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$70.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

How does one describe the nature of this place that is the Great Plains? Diane Quantic and P. Jane Hafen do not attempt to answer that question in *A Great Plains Reader*, a marvelous collection of prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction reflecting varied responses to the land and its inhabitants. They do, however, initiate a process of discovery and inquiry that compels the collection's reader to consider past and present, physical and psychological boundaries, and placement and displacement. And to that end, the title reflects the editors' double concern with both product and process: to compile a set of readings on the Great Plains experience, and to invite one to become a reader of the Great Plains.

Noticeably absent from the *Plains Reader* is a map designating geographical boundaries. Readings fall instead under one of five broad sections—*The Lay of the Land*, *Natives and Newcomers on the Great Plains*, *Arriving and Settling In*, *Adapting to a New Country*, and *The Great Plains Community*—that become a method of mapping, textually, the contours of the landscape, the fluidity of boundaries, and the variety of impression and expression. Like Chimney Rock or Devil's Tower, familiar literary figures and works serve as signposts: Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky," Zitkala-Sa's "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," Sandoz's "The Christmas of the Phonograph Records," Stafford's "The Rescued Year," and Garland's "Among the Corn Rows." Yet like the blow-out penstemon, the text contains equally beau-



tiful works that might otherwise go unnoticed by the student for whom this collection serves as an introduction to Plains literature and can also be appreciated by a more seasoned, native reader. Works by Ron Hanson, Diane Glancy, Joy Harjo, William Allen White, John Madson, Sharon Butala, and Lois Hudson constitute just some of the hidden, rarely anthologized pieces that help trace the ecological, historical, and economic evolution of this place.

For those familiar with the expansiveness of the Plains literary tradition, *A Great Plains Reader* possesses some noticeable gaps. The *Reader* contains selections by important Canadian writers (Sinclair Ross, Robert Stead, Butala, Robert Kroetsch), but absent are any selections from Margaret Laurence or Ross's *As For Me and My House*, a novel whose significance matches that of Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth* in showing responses to life on the prairie. And it is unfortunate that the excerpt from Wright Morris's *The Home Place* cannot be read as originally published—with prose and photographic text placed side by side. These, however, are minor shortcomings; and apparently aware of limitations of space and economy, the editors provide topical essays highlighting pertinent historical information and literary themes and figures as well as offering suggestions for further reading.

Quantic and Hafen succeed, finally, in providing “a sampling of . . . explorations into the Great Plains as a place and state of mind.” In the process, they create an object—*A Great Plains Reader*—that introduces its audience to a complex ecosystem, a rich narrative tradition and history, and an evolving physical and psychological landscape. But they also create a subject—a Great Plains reader—who will want not only to absorb the readings that object contains, but also to be challenged anew in thinking about the ways the land and writing about the land shape who we are.

PHILIP R. COLEMAN-HULL  
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Bethany College, Kansas

*West of Emerson: The Design of Manifest Destiny.* By Kris Fresonke. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. xii + 201 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

This book might find a place on the bookshelf between Sacvan Bercovitch's *The Rites of Assent* and Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land*, perhaps next to Robert Hurlbutt's *Hume, Newton, and the Design Argument*, and at least near Saul Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals*. The book's critical purposes are “to describe the theological lineage of manifest destiny, or the quasi-sacred explanation for the way America looked to Americans in the nineteenth century” and “to see key texts of our nature canon, *Nature* and *Walden*, in this new line of descent.”

The first three chapters take up over half the book and consist of entertaining tutorials on how to recognize fraudulent Jacksonian political discourse masquerading as travel narrative and history writing (Zebulon Pike's exoneration narrative, Stephen Long's political evasion, and William Emory's geographical errata). The first chapter on Lewis and Clark may be the most interesting, for in it Fresonke claims that their efforts in the *Journals* to find merit in antique national designs (the sublime, the Arcadian, the picturesque, or the virgin land), while noting painstakingly just how *deficient* those designs were, place them “first in a nineteenth-century process” of saving design from itself—manifest destiny deconstructed.

The second part is the more challenging intellectually, for it explores how Emerson and Thoreau approached the daunting task of providing alternative uses for “the rhetoric of American Providence [which] had been taken over by Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party and reformulated as manifest destiny. . . .” Fresonke believes that Emerson tried to recombine design and providence into a new theory of “animated American nature,” allowing for a new reading of *Nature* that not only would lead to Spirit but also counter the Jacksonian design of destiny-in-progress.

"Thoreau and the Design of Dissent" (the most complex analysis) begins with the idea of manifest destiny as "the product of a fallen world view." And realizing that Thoreau used Ruskin's aesthetics of "defamiliarization," Fresonke goes on to show that Thoreau wished to recover the innocence of the eye. So, in the end, Thoreau relies on that which the innocent eye sees—"Higher Laws"; and "such transcendence was the only relevant practice of Christianity left the modern believer. . . ."

The value of *West of Emerson* to this reader's mind is in its vigorous radical schemes of discourse and its lively intellectual entertainment in exploring embedded political plots, which send us back to read Lewis and Clark, Emerson, and Thoreau as they wrestle with the language of politics.

CHARLES W. MIGNON  
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*Marriage, Violence, and the Nation in the American Literary West.* By William R. Handley. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xi + 261 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00.

"If the West tells us anything," says William Handley, "it is that stories have powerful consequences." This book reads western stories anew, not as familiar tales of individualism but as family dramas with newly thought-provoking consequences for the "nation's racial future." Handley argues that twentieth-century western literature is more preoccupied with marriage than with the frontier. Marriage serves as an analogy for US national unity while also exposing the uncontainable violence at the heart of nation-building. These stories demonstrate that, having destroyed the racial and ethnic "others" against whom the nation defined itself, "imperialism brings its guns home."

Handley begins his close readings by reconsidering the influence of Frederick Jack-

son Turner's 1893 "Frontier Thesis" on twentieth-century fiction and historiography. He argues that the essay's power is primarily literary. Rhetorical figures (allegory, antithesis, metaphor) and syntactical constructions (crucially, the passive voice of innocent action) propel Turner's argument, endow it with coherence, and facilitate the nation's escape from historical responsibility. Such rhetorical sleights-of-hand also produce the trope of frontier individualism.

Handley next exposes the centrality of marriage for those most famous popularizers of heroic individualism, Owen Wister and Zane Grey. *The Virginian* is "plot-driven to the altar of marriage." Wister needs this all-white union—southern hero marrying eastern schoolma'am in the West—not only to resolve a nation violently riven by sectional, ethnic, and industrial strife, but to rewrite comedically his first, tragic story. "Hank's Woman" narrates the violent mayhem caused by marriage across ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences in the West. In *Riders of the Purple Sage*, Grey bolsters white supremacy by demonizing Mormonism. Writing in the midst of an "anti-Mormon magazine crusade," Grey revived paranoia that had died out in 1890 when polygamy was outlawed. Plural marriage had so threatened normative national identity that Mormons were defined as racially different from the "white" American majority.

Handley then turns to four very different writers who dramatize the connections between marriage and nation more violently than ever. Willa Cather (whose "literary corpses," Handley notes, outnumber Wister's and Grey's combined) challenges formulaic expectations of a heroic West. Repeatedly, marriage brings her western immigrants into violent confrontation with ineluctable ethnic differences and the effects of "racialized nationalism." F. Scott Fitzgerald aligns "domestic misery and national destiny" in *The Great Gatsby* through characters' racism, adultery, and multiple murders. For Joan Didion and Wallace Stegner, there are no happy endings, personal or national.

The best their troubled marriages and dysfunctional families can tell us—about the West and the nation—is where things went wrong.

CHRISTINE BOLD  
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University of Guelph

*Unsettling the Literary West: Authenticity and Authorship.* By Nathaniel Lewis. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. x + 297 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95.

Its promise to revolutionize western studies aside, Nathaniel Lewis's *Unsettling the Literary West* offers several smart readings of western texts along with a unique analytical approach to the field. Lewis's central claim is that as early as the 1830s writers of western literature felt an undue obligation to capture the "true West," to produce books that stressed accurate renditions of landscape, and, however exaggerated, to claim real-world credentials to substantiate their observations. Though most of these writers understood absolute realism to be impossible, they were performing for eastern audiences whose interest lay not in artistic perception but in the "genuine" frontier. The result was a literature that "suppress[ed] the imaginative power of authors and the discursive play of language" and compelled critics to read western books more as cultural history than art.

While Lewis insists that such misreadings have constrained western writers unto today, he seems to be tracking a critical more than authorial tendency. From Timothy Flint and James Hall in the 1830s to later writers like Joaquin Miller and Frank Norris, *Unsettling the Literary West* charts the anxiety of historical influence that caused some writers to despair over their inability to offer a perfect representation of region. But Lewis is also quick to highlight writers—from Kirkland, Poe, and Twain to the postmodernists—who intentionally played with regionalist boundaries and whose transgressions yielded narratives far more complex than critics realize. The quest

for "authenticity," then, becomes more academic impulse than totalizing malady, not a precept that western writers refused to violate so much as a critical shorthand forcing doctrinaire readings onto unreceptive texts or ignoring those texts altogether.

Perhaps the book's arguments about the persistence of authorial anxiety would have carried more weight if explored in greater depth, but *Unsettling the Literary West* addresses only about a dozen books at length, ranging from the start of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth. Also, some conspicuous figures are absent from this lineup: Cooper, Harte, Wister, Cather, and others whose presence might have complicated the book's central thesis.

Finally, though, the epilogue confirms Lewis's modest hope that his book will encourage critics to read literature "as literature," and it is this smaller overture to art—to the notion that western writing must be more than fodder for scholars of cultural studies—that reclaims the sense of purpose with which the work begins. *Unsettling the Literary West* will not rewrite the landscape of western studies, but its methodology compels further investigation into this tyranny of "the authentic." And in more expansive fashion, Lewis's book echoes other recent studies that favor innovative dialogue with western texts over the traditional but restrictive rubrics into which such texts are too often collapsed.

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Seton Hall University

*First to Fight.* By Henry Mihesuah. Edited by Devon A. Mihesuah. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. xviii + 103 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95.

*First to Fight* is a brief life history of Henry Mihesuah, a Comanche born in the 1920s. It is exactly what it promises to be—a collection of personal reminiscences by Henry Mihesuah of his life, recorded and arranged by his daughter-in-law.



A major strength of the book is its addressing a wide range of subjects that have had a profound impact on Native Americans of Mihesuah's generation: the Depression, farming, Christian churches, military service, post-World War II relocation programs, the widespread attachment to allotments as "home places," and frequent visits to the tribal community. The book poignantly demonstrates the powerful impact of the boarding school experience on altering Indian ways of life and on the loss of tribal culture and language. It also provides highlights of Mihesuah's life through childhood activities, family support, and military service, along with some of the low points involving poverty, racism, employment and wage discrimination, cultural separation through relocation, a tragic car accident, tribal factionalism, and the effects of alcoholism in Indian communities.

Aside from a temporal discrepancy (Henry's birth in the 1920s and Quanah's death in 1911—perhaps intended to refer to Henry's father) and a few editorial flaws, the volume's only shortcoming is its brevity. I was left with a desire to know more about Henry Mihesuah and his life experiences. But what the book lacks in length is made up for in the richness of its accounts and personal reflections. The material is forthright, down to earth, and representative of many aspects of Comanche culture and life in the mid to late twentieth century. Moreover, it demonstrates its subject's tremendous personal and cultural pride, determination, and inner strength, qualities that have enabled many American Indians to navigate successfully their way through the seemingly endless legal, political, economic, educational, and racial obstacles they continue to face in their daily lives.

In short, *First to Fight* is an important addition to the growing number of autobiographical works by Native writers.

WILLIAM C. MEADOWS

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*Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry*. Edited by Kris Dean Rader and Janice Gould. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003. x + 294 pp. Notes, suggestions for further reading, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

While *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry* is written primarily for literary scholars, it does offer content useful for those in other areas of Native Studies and for those particularly involved with the study of Great Plains cultures. The editors' introduction sets up expectations that these essays will address aspects of American Indian poetry from both Native and non-Native perspectives and will avoid the study of texts preceding the American Indian Literary Renaissance (that is, texts prior to 1968 and commonly written about by scholars such as Kroeber, Rothenberg, and Bierhorst). Contemporary writing is the focus rather than ritual oral traditions.

The well-written essays that follow offer a variety of critical and theoretical approaches from scholars and scholar/poets, with a unique intertextuality arising from some contributors analyzing the poetic works of other writers in the volume. The ordering of the essays, some reprinted, some written for the collection, underscores this. For instance, Marilou Awiakta's "Daydreaming Primal Space: Cherokee Aesthetics as Habits of Being" is followed by Daniel Heath Justice's "Beloved Woman Returns: The Doubleweaving of Homeland and Identity in the Poetry of Marilou Awiakta" and Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez's "The Power and Presence of Native Oral Storytelling Traditions in the Poetry of Marilou Awiakta, Kimberly Blaeser, and Marilyn Dumont." Although there is a heavier focus on the work of women writers, the book provides substantial range, with essays from Dean Rader's "The Epic Lyric: Genre and Contemporary American Indian Poetry" to Qwo-Li Driskill's "Call Me Brother: Two-Spritedness, the Erotic, and Mixedblood Identity as Sites of Sovereignty and Resistance in Gregory Scofield's Poetry." Great Plains

poets whose work is examined include Scofield, who is Canadian Cree; Elizabeth Cook Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux); Marnie Walsh (Dakota); nila northSun (Shoshone Chippewa); James Welch (Blackfoot Gros Ventre); and N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa).

This poetry undoes static notions of American Indian identity. An excerpt from nila northSun's "moving camp to far" reflects the changes in these cultures since contact and their continued resistance through the act of survival as near extinct eagles endure on "slurpee plastic cups." And Scofield's Two-Spirit/Queer poetry certainly challenges any essentialist ideas of Plains Indian masculinity. This volume shifts the focus in formal studies of American Indian poetics to the people as they are now and their hopes for healing in the future.

KIMBERLY ROPPOLO

Department of Native American Studies  
University of Lethbridge

*Carol Shields, Narrative Hunger, and the Possibilities of Fiction.* Edited by Edward Eden and Dee Goertz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. x + 323 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$27.95, paper.

Based on an address she gave at Hanover College in 1996, the collection opens with an essay by Carol Shields, "Narrative Hunger and the Overflowing Cupboard," in which she argues that readers have a hunger for narrative that can never be satisfied. This hunger, which manifests itself in a cultural fascination with obituaries and biographies, is related to the insufficiency of language to describe the world. Were language to match experience exactly, the reader could rest. But because experience can never be articulated in its totality, readers long for more. Shields argues that one of the reasons this hunger persists unabated is that certain stories, particularly those by women, continue to be considered irrelevant or

unpublishable. Hunger for narrative, motivating both reader and writer, is then both good and bad, driven by loss but also driving the production of beauty, art, and (temporary) satiation.

Shields's essay is followed by nine articles seeking to situate her work in relation to contemporary literary criticism, particularly feminism and postmodernism. Five address Shields's experimentation with narrative form, while the remainder read her work in terms of "reaching beyond the word," or how Shields attempts to articulate private and idiosyncratic experiences in a public language. The collection concludes with an annotated bibliography of works by and about the author.

Shields's interest in biography and autobiography is picked up by most of the volume's contributors, who focus primarily on these themes in Shields' novels *Small Ceremonies*, *Swann*, and *The Stone Diaries*, and in her biography of Jane Austen. While these essays are generally well-written, readers already familiar with existing Shields scholarship will find little new in them. Nor may the essays be best served by being published adjacent to each other. In addition to focusing on a number of the same critical issues, many of the papers refer to the same passages, cite the same critics, and focus on the same characters. These similarities contribute to a unified collection, but make for tedious reading cover to cover. An exception is Lisa Johnson's recuperation of the novel as a work of resistance, in which she contests some of Shields's own assertions and provides a note of variety in a study of an author whose work is itself shifting and various.

ALISON CALDER

Department of English  
University of Manitoba

*Rural Voices: Place-Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing.* Edited by Robert E. Brooke. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003. xi + 203 pp. References, index. \$48.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

*Rural Voices*, a collection of pedagogical essays from ten rural Nebraska elementary and secondary teachers, members of the Nebraska Writing Project's Rural Voices, Country Schools team, combines theory and practice to connect students and teachers with their surrounding communities, teaching them "to live well, actively, and fully in a given place." Robert Brooke's introduction begins, as does each of the essays, with a personal story about his connection to the Great Plains. Since "[l]ocal communities, regions, and histories are the places where we shape our individual lives," Brooke believes, they are essential to making education and writing relevant to students,

In the first essay, Sandy Bangert focuses on literacy education in her first-through-fourth-grade Stapleton rural school, studying literature that celebrates local communities, collecting family stories, and investigating local history. She provides many useful examples of books exploring life in farming communities and describes her development of a community writing club. Phip Ross of Waverly High assigns regional authors, invites local townspeople to his writing classes, and takes his students on field trips to spur creative writing.

In Henderson, Sharon Bishop's students study Nebraska writers, collect oral histories to create subjects for poetry and essays, and experience the prairie to enrich their nature writing. Bev Wilhelm of Syracuse also uses family stories, community history, and unusual field trips to instill a sense of pride and respect for neighborhoods. In addition, she partners her students with elementary students as well as military veterans to make connections through the generations. To foster community awareness, Judith K. Schafer's students of Wayne visit with the town's entrepreneurs and pair with senior citizens for a journal exchange.

Students in Rising City, led by Amy Hottovy, become involved in a Community Journal Project that centers on the threat of school consolidation, while in Cedar Bluffs High School, Robyn A. Dalton institutes a Career Discernment Project, linking students with local businesses. Carol MacDaniels discusses the Nebraska Writing Project's Rural Institute Program and its goal of establishing a community in the classroom, promoting the heritage, history, and culture of Nebraska.

Marian Matthews, mentor from the University of New Mexico, concludes the collection by reasserting the importance of the National Writing Project's goal of exemplary teachers sharing their writing practices with each other and stressing the importance of schooling "grounded within the rich context of individual communities and local places" rather than homogenized "big-mart education."

*Rural Voices* has much to offer, not only in the diversity of its individual voices but also in the specific practices, assignments, and results provided by the teachers within the collection.

SUSANNE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD  
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*Karl Bodmer's Studio Art: The Newberry Library Bodmer Collection.* By W. Raymond Wood, Joseph C. Porter, and David C. Hunt. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. ix + 164 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, references, index. \$45.00.

Karl Bodmer's field sketches executed along the upper Missouri between 1832 and 1834 constitute one of the principal sources of visual evidence regarding the ethnohistory of the Northern Plains. In this volume a less well-known selection of these works, both drawings and watercolors, held in the collections of the Newberry Library receives for the first time sustained scholarly consideration, situ-



ated in a historical context defined by the ethnologic ambitions of Bodmer's patron, Prince Maximilian. Anthropologist W. Raymond Wood first briefly recounts the familiar story of the artist's travels and then traces the provenance of the artworks themselves, which he praises elaborately for their scientific accuracy. This insistence on the documentary transparency of Bodmer's images recurs in the long essay by Joseph C. Porter that follows, the volume's centerpiece. Porter, curator at the North Carolina Museum of History and co-editor of Maximilian's journals, establishes the intellectual framework within which Bodmer worked, paying particular attention to contemporary scientific theories with regard to race. David C. Hunt, currently Director of the Stark Museum of Art, traces the publication history of Bodmer's later translations of his own field studies into aquatints, describing the print techniques involved, the production of multiple editions priced for different markets, the choice of engravers and printers, and known variants in a discussion certain to interest bibliophiles and collectors. The volume culminates in thirty-two black-and-white and twelve color reproductions of the Newberry Bodmers, which alone justify its purchase, affording the reader opportunity to make sense of the primary evidence—the images themselves—in the contexts provided. Wood accompanies this set of handsome plates with helpful annotation.

Despite some awkward redundancy caused by its organization as a collection of essays, each with its own bibliography and notes, *Karl Bodmer's Studio Art* is certain to appeal to amateur as well as professional historians. The authors' insistence on the documentary nature of the works of art they reproduce but never analyze, however, underestimates their evidentiary value. When addressing Bodmer's work rather than its context, for instance, Porter lapses into bland tautology, describing the images as "wonderful examples of expeditionary art" that somehow provide "a remarkable view onto Jacksonian America." Whereas

such works of art by their very nature invite close pictorial assessments informed by recognition of just the sort of complex thematic engagements he otherwise carefully elaborates, Porter prefers to read Bodmer's images somewhat reductively, reproducing a view of Fort Pierre, for example, to illustrate a passing reference to Fort Pierre. The authors find much to say *around* but disappointingly little to say *about* the works of art they reproduce. Wood notes in his introduction that while historians and anthropologists have tended to "idolize" Bodmer, "the world of art" has not. I would suggest that rather than idolize the artist, paying tribute to the accuracy of his transcriptions, it might be preferable to engage the complex *visual evidence* these objects represent—a project still pending to which this volume nonetheless usefully contributes.

KENNETH HALTMAN

Department of Art and Art History and  
Program in American Studies  
Michigan State University

*Barns of Kansas: A Pictorial History.* By Robert L. Marsh. Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2002. ix + 166 pp. Photographs, map, glossary, bibliography, index. \$86.55 leather, \$44.02 cloth.

This catalog of old barns from Kansas appears at a propitious moment when considerable popular attention is being directed toward historic farm buildings in the "Sunflower State." The National Park Service along with the Kansas State Historical Society is currently in the middle of a five-year assessment of the state's historic resources, a survey that includes many historic farms. The "Barn Again" program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation has recently bestowed its highest commendation on barn restoration projects in Doniphan, Osage, and Pottawatomie Counties. This concern with agricultural legacies is reinforced as well by the University of Kansas's

Spencer Museum of Art which has been traveling an exhibition entitled "Remembering the Family Farm: 150 Years of American Prints" since 2001.

Robert L. Marsh's *Barns of Kansas* is, as its subtitle explains, less a book than an album. An affectionate labor of appreciation, it catalogs his discoveries made across a vast array of Kansas farms and ranches from the slopes of the Ozarks in the east out to the High Plains at its western border. An architect by profession, Marsh has an eye for barns that are large and monumental, although he is careful to include a few of the more representative and modestly proportioned structures as well. He is quick to indicate that his chief purpose was to photograph barns rather than to recover their histories or to interpret their historical and cultural significance.

On such matters, Marsh defers to the cultural geographers and architectural historians who have specialized in the study of agricultural buildings. His aim was to satisfy his curiosity about the more spectacular and intriguing old barns he encountered over several years of prowling along dusty country roads. He gives considerable attention, for example, to round barns even though only twenty-one are still standing and there were never more than fifty in the entire state. Many of his photographs are of massive stone or frame barns of cathedralesque proportions. While certainly worthy of documentation—and even our respect as marvelous works—such buildings deflect attention from the representative norm and thus imbue the story of agriculture on the Plains with too rosy a glow. Marsh's decided focus on exceptional examples indicates that there is still a need for a rigorous survey of barns in Kansas, and he would be among the first to say so.

*Barns of Kansas* is a beautifully produced volume filled with wonderful color photographs, all of them made on bright sunny days so that each barn's salient features are rendered with great clarity. Marsh produced this volume because he is finally an advocate for the preservation of old barns. It is likely that

his book will encourage others to join him in that worthy mission.

JOHN MICHAEL VLACH  
Departments of American Studies and  
Anthropology  
George Washington University

*On Fire.* By Larry Schwarm. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. 128 pp. Photographs, index. \$39.95.

Larry Schwarm grew up on a farm in southcentral Kansas, received an M.F.A. degree from the University of Kansas, and since 1988 has taught photography in the art department at Emporia State University, located in the Flint Hills of eastcentral Kansas, a remarkable geographical and topographical feature, where rolling hills extend for miles at a time, with no trees, fences, roads, or structures to impede them. On these hills is the largest remaining stand of the tallgrass prairie that once covered the eastern Great Plains. This land is now used for grazing, and each spring ranchers light fires to the dead remains of the last season's grass, burning it off to keep back trees and weeds, while creating fertile conditions for new growth grass, whose tender shoots will nourish cattle grazed there.

Since 1990, Schwarm has been photographing this annual ritual of the spring burning of the prairie. Sixty-eight of these pictures are assembled, with an introduction by photographer Robert Adams, in this eloquently designed and exquisitely printed book, the inaugural volume of a series dedicated to publishing the work of the biennial winner of the Center for Documentary Studies/Honickman First Book Prize in Photography.

These pictures, all in color, are stunningly beautiful, displaying flames moving across vast open spaces of prairie, often as the sole link between earth and sky, photographed at day, night, and twilight, under blue skies, clouds, and the moon. Schwarm uses prairie fires as a focus for meditation on the subtle beauty of

the Plains, constructing where others might see nothing an aesthetic we might call the "minimalist sublime": Schwarm himself writes of the "sublime and mystical character of the burning landscape, where images are at once both sensuous and menacing."

Schwarm's cogent afterword positions the fires as one of the four elements, along with earth, air, and water, to underscore the mythic quality of the pictures and their subject: the burning of the prairie is a cycle of renewal and rebirth, found first in natural fires and in the practice of Native American dwellers of the Plains, only later adopted by European settlers. In this short essay the photographer links his work to the color-field paintings of Mark Rothko, an apt choice, for in both artists' work subtle hues of color intersect to become grids hovering between spumy abstractions and actual landscapes.

JOHN PULTZ

Department of Art History and Spencer  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

*Place: Lethbridge, A City on the Prairie.* By Geoffrey James and Rudy Wiebe. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2002. 127 pp. Photographs. \$50.00.

*"The wind is a sea in Lethbridge, and usually by noon the tide rises and the city begins to flood."*

In 1998 Joan Stebbins, curator at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, invited Toronto-based photographer Geoffrey James to photograph the city of Lethbridge, Alberta. James is known for his large format black-and-white photographs of specific sites: formal French gardens; the city of Paris; the running fence on the border separating the US and Mexico; asbestos mines in Quebec. In late 1999 his photographs were exhibited as "The Lethbridge Project." Subsequently novelist Rudy Wiebe was invited to write a parallel

text to accompany James's photographs for *Place*.

Lethbridge is a small city located at the junction of the Old Man and Belly Rivers in the southwest corner of Alberta. This area is bounded by the Montana border to the south, the Rocky Mountains to the west, and the expanse of the prairie to the east. Rudy Wiebe first came to Lethbridge as a child in 1947 and still has family ties to the city. His text is an intimate portrait formed by the intermingling of memory and factual history. Wiebe's meditations are on the landscape of history: place-names, Aboriginal oral histories, settlement, weather, the Japanese-Canadian presence, WW II prisoner of war camps, coal mining, business, industry, racism, childhood memory, golf course development, and the High Level Bridge (spanning the coulee, the Canadian Pacific Railway bridge is the most visually striking structure in town).

Wiebe begins a section of his text with an extended description of the ever-present wind in Lethbridge, a description rooted in deep familiarity. This familiarity is offset by Geoffrey James's unfamiliarity. James's photographs, in his words, "... make no claim to be a portrait of Lethbridge in any conventional sense." James visited Lethbridge four times over the course of a year to produce a body of images expressing his particular view of the *Place*. His black-and-white photographs follow the manner of the New Topographic photographic movement of the 1970s filtered through the influences of Atget and Walker Evans. They are concerned with the urban edge and vernacular architecture rather than an appraisal of the city that would meet with the approval of the local Chamber of Commerce.

DON GILL

Department of Art  
University of Lethbridge



## BOOK NOTES

*Prairie: A North American Guide.* By Suzanne Winckler. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004. Maps, recommended readings, index. 132 pp. \$16.95 paper.

Suzanne Winckler has created a guide to what remains of native prairies in North America. Included are prairies found in the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba as well as a broad swath of the US from North Dakota to Texas and as far east as Illinois. Maps locate them geographically and by name, and there is a list of recommended readings and Web sites. Exact driving directions to the more than three hundred sites are provided as well.

\* \* \*

*Three Years on the Plains: Observations of Indians, 1867-1870.* By Edmund B. Tuttle. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. Map, illustrations. x + 207 pp. \$29.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

As post chaplain at Fort D. A. Russell in Wyoming Territory from 1867-1870, Edmund B. Tuttle witnessed the changing relationship between the US military and Native Americans. His account details many of those interactions on the Northern High Plains during the 1860s, in particular with the Sioux and Cheyenne. This is volume 66 in The Western Frontier Library.

\* \* \*

*The Comanche Code Talkers of World II.* By William C. Meadows. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. Photographs, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

This book details the role that Comanche code talkers played in the European theater during

World War II. William C. Meadows interviewed surviving members of the group and follows their lives from their recruitment during the war to the present. He looks at the development of code talking, compares his Comanche subjects with their Navajo counterparts, and assesses the factors that led them to serve their country.

\* \* \*

*Western Women's Lives: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century.* Edited by Sandra K. Schackel. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. Notes, bibliography. \$22.95 paper.

The sixteen essays exploring how women in the West have experienced the twentieth century are organized around the themes of politics and power, women and mobility, staying on the land, uncovering women's voices, and reshaping cultural images and ideas. Editor Sandra K. Schackel has written an introduction to each section in this recent addition to the *Historians of the Frontier and American West* series.

\* \* \*

*L. Frank Baum: Creator of Oz.* By Katharine M. Rogers. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002. Photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography. xiv + 304 pp. \$27.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

In this first full-length biography of Frank Baum Katharine Rogers provides a comprehensive portrayal of his early life and the books he wrote after *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Rogers devotes part of her book to summarizing Baum's stories and highlights his commitment to creating strong, independent female characters.

# NOTES AND NEWS

## A NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS OF *GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY*

We want to remind everyone who receives *Great Plains Quarterly* that if you ever receive an issue that is damaged or defaced in any manner, please contact us so we can replace the item at our expense. You can call us at (402) 472-3082, or email us at <cgps@unl.edu>. We strive to make sure our readers are 100% satisfied with the quality of the journal, and this also applies to the physical condition of each issue.

## EXTENDING CALL FOR PAPERS: "EDUCATION ON THE GREAT PLAINS"

The *Great Plains Quarterly* will be publishing a special issue on Education and the Great Plains. Submissions appropriate for this issue may include historical studies of education or educators, research on educational content or pedagogy related to the Plains, analyses of literary accounts of education, and studies focusing on education relevant to specific racial, ethnic, and other cultural groups located in the Great Plains. The deadline for submissions will be extended to October 1, 2004. Manuscript and submission guidelines can be found at: < <http://www.unl.edu/plains/publications/GPQ/gpqinst.html> >. Send your submissions or questions to: Charles A. Braithwaite, Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0313, (402) 472-6178, <cbraithwaite2@unl.edu>.

## CALL FOR PAPERS: WESTERN HISTORY ASSOCIATION 2005 CONFERENCE

The Western History Association's 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, to be held October 12-15, 2005 in Phoenix, Arizona, will center on the

theme: Western Traditions and Transitions: Cultural Diversity and Demographic Change. The program committee invites the submission of individual papers, roundtable discussions, panels, and sessions relating to the theme. Committee members encourage submissions focused on architecture, art, dance, food, gaming, immigration, Indian sovereignty, language, migration, music, schools, sports, tourism, the U.S.-Mexico border, urbanization, and water rights. Program chairs for the conference in 2005 are Myla Vicenti Carpio (Vicenti@asu.edu) and Donald L. Fixico (dfixico@ku.edu). Send all proposals to Professor Myla Vicenti Carpio, American Indian Studies Department, Arizona State University, Box 870803, Tempe, AZ 85287-0803.

## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS HISTORY CONFERENCE

The 39th Annual Northern Great Plains History Conference will be held October 27-30, 2004, in Bismarck, North Dakota. The conference theme is "A Circle of Cultures: Lewis and Clark on the Northern Plains," and is hosted by the Department of History, Bismarck State College and the State Historical Society of North Dakota. For more information, please contact: Kathleen Davison, Program Chair, Northern Great Plains History Conference, State Historical Society of North Dakota, 612 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505; (701) 328-4725; fax: (701) 328-3710; <kdavison@state.nd.us>.

## THE LEWIS AND CLARK REDISCOVERY CD-ROM

Designed to serve as a resource to K-12 students and teachers, the Lewis and Clark Rediscovery CD-ROM includes imagery from

many sites along the Lewis and Clark trail, including Quicktime VR movies of key sites along the trail. Also on the CD-ROM are sections of the journals of the expedition, images from historical artists, and volumes of information regarding the expedition compressed into a CD-ROM. Classroom teachers may receive a free copy of the CD by contacting: Megan Hansen, [cerps@hotmail.com](mailto:cerps@hotmail.com); (208) 885-678; College of Education, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-0903.

#### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

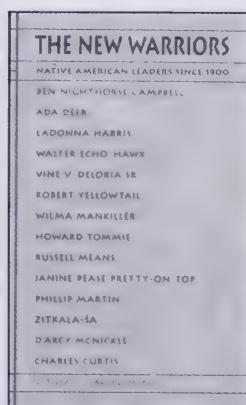
The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian celebrates the grand opening on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, September 21, 2004. The museum's grand opening will include numerous activities during a week of festivities, including a six-day First Nations Festival paying tribute to Native American musicians, dancers, and storytellers. Additionally, the National Congress of American Indians, in collaboration with the American Indian Society of Washington, D.C., will host a Social Dance on September 21, 2004, on the National Mall. This cultural exchange will in-

clude the sharing of tribal dances, songs, and other traditions by Native people. For additional information contact the Smithsonian Visitor Information Associate's Reception Center 202-633-1000, or visit the web site at < <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>>.

#### THE BILL AND RITA CLEMENTS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS FOR 2005-2006

The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University invites applications for two full-year and one single-semester residential research fellowships. Full-year fellowships carry a stipend of \$37,000, health benefits, a \$1,500 allowance for research and travel expenses, and a publication subvention. Single-semester fellowships will receive an \$18,500 stipend, a \$750 research allowance, and a publication subvention. Individuals in any field in the humanities or social sciences doing research on Southwestern America are invited to apply. The fellowships are designed to provide time for senior or junior scholars to bring book-length manuscripts to completion. Application deadline is January 10, 2005. Please see details at [www.smu.edu/swcenter](http://www.smu.edu/swcenter) or email [swcenter@smu.edu](mailto:swcenter@smu.edu) for more information.





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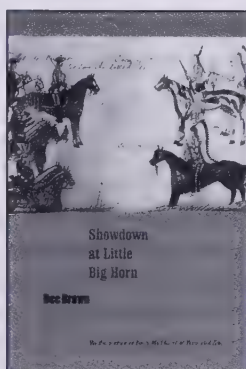
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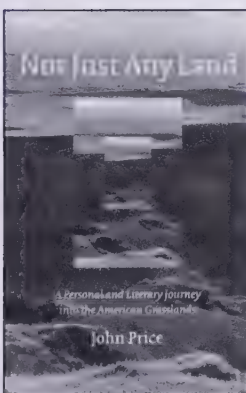
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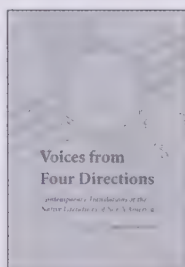
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#### FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD

The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in *Great Plains Quarterly* during a volume year. All articles submitted to the *Quarterly* are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from the editorial board of the *Quarterly*. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies' annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of \$250.00.

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# GREAT PLAINS QUARTERLY

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# REFINING RURAL SPACES

## WOMEN AND VERNACULAR GENTILITY

### IN THE GREAT PLAINS, 1880-1920

ANDREA G. RADKE

In 1887 the Plains photographer Solomon Butcher met the David Hilton family in Custer County, Nebraska. Mrs. Hilton desired a photograph to send to relatives back East, but felt embarrassed by the family's sod dwelling. She insisted that Butcher not take a photo of the house, but asked the men to drag the Hiltons' beautiful new pump organ out into the field, where the family could pose around the instrument. The sod house remained outside the photograph, and after the session the men returned the organ to the house.<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Hilton,

the organ became her personal symbol of aspirations to middle-class refinement in spite of harsh conditions. While the Hiltons certainly could not control the circumstances of living in a dirt home, Mrs. Hilton could control the public display of refinement in her rural Plains home. Women who settled in the Great Plains between 1880 and 1920 often encountered the harshest of conditions and yet still sought to achieve "gentility" through various civilizing processes. These included adaptations of domestic refinement, access to material goods and literary culture, and the performance of civilizing manners and behavior that represented "proper" Euro-American civilization.<sup>2</sup>

Rural Plains women—both European immigrants and American-born—participated in the vital feminine practice of refining the Great Plains in the decades around the turn of the century. Refinement, as it will be used here, suggests the improvement or elaboration of behavior, manners, and material culture toward the aspirations of gentility. The process of refinement includes removing any "rude, gross, or vulgar elements" and acquiring "fineness of feeling, taste, and thought," including the "elegance of manners, culture,

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FIG. 1. *The David Hilton family with pump organ, Custer County, Nebraska, 1888. Courtesy Solomon Butcher Collection (B 983-3535), Nebraska State Historical Society.*

and polish.”<sup>3</sup> Women homesteaders sought specific means of appropriating the notions of refined civilization to their difficult circumstances; and this they did in spite of extreme distances from urban or town centers, the harshness of the Plains climate, and a lack of material resources. Whereas some women and their families found themselves reduced to what many considered the animalistic levels of their new surroundings, most settlers brought with them already-existing ideals of civilization that they attempted to transplant into their new rural places. Men were not excluded from this process; although individual males sometimes presented challenges to their wives’ attempts at refinement, most couples jointly aspired to an ideal of middle-class re-

finement. Women took an especially active role in the process, particularly as caretakers of the private and domestic spheres of the rural homestead in the Great Plains.

The idea of “vernacular gentility” was first conceived by Richard Bushman to understand early Americans’ attempts to achieve simple refinement. “Vernacular gentility” can also explain how rural Plains women, with little or no material resources, were able to transplant the expectations of civilized American society by using simplified or “makeshift” versions of proper cultural symbols and upper-class refinement. Thus, rural farm families who lacked the financial resources to “erect mansions, send their children to academies, and dress in silk and fine woolens,” could find “less expensive

substitutes."<sup>4</sup> Rural settlers imbedded their desires for culture and refinement within the survival process itself, and women especially wove together their desires for refinement with their survival instincts. For Plains women, refinement of one's sphere often meant appropriating light, space, and window coverings, and these simple necessities became elegant luxuries. By adapting their simplified forms of furnishings and architectural space, Great Plains homesteaders took on the characteristics of gentility and consciously turned themselves into "distant outposts" of cultured American civilization.<sup>5</sup> Rural Plains women took an active role in this process, and through the performance of vernacular gentility, they helped to create a rural Great Plains culture as part of the larger American civilization.

#### WOMEN AS CIVILIZERS

Few historians of western women would dispute the civilizing role of female Plains settlers, especially as they transplanted the values, institutions, and material culture of American society to the rural West. Historians have examined the complexity of this civilizing role and women's varied reactions to their western experiences, especially by moving beyond any simplistic generalizations about feminine qualities of domesticity, gentleness, and goodness. As Robert Griswold has noted, women's civilizing effort

should not be confused with the influence of ethereal "madonnas in sunbonnets" or bloodless "gentle tamers" who allegedly worked wonders by the sheer force of their pious, self-sacrificing example. These images of western women are useless stereotypes that obscure the real relations between men and women and blind us to women's prolonged battle over the West."<sup>6</sup>

Julie Roy Jeffrey showed how women actively sought to reproduce the institutions and cultural forms of American civilization in the West, as a way of marking themselves and their

families against the harsh and difficult environment.<sup>7</sup> Glenda Riley and Sandra Myres have built upon Jeffrey's scholarship, particularly by emphasizing that women often continued their civilizing efforts in spite of a lack of material resources. According to Riley, women "showed tremendous creativity in coping with their crude homes, frequently turning their interiors into comfortable dwelling places that sometimes even boasted a touch of elegance."<sup>8</sup> And Myres has described women's efforts to achieve vernacular gentility as "making do" with simple materials; indeed, despite the "scarcity of materials," many women "added little touches to brighten their homes."<sup>9</sup>

Women's civilizing influence in the Great Plains has been addressed by historian Paula Nelson in his description of the activities of western townswomen between 1870 and 1920. However, since townswomen had easier access to material goods through railroads and shops, their experiences fail to capture the "vernacular gentility" of their rural sisters who encountered much harsher conditions.<sup>10</sup> Angel Kwolek-Folland has more specifically examined how both urban and rural Kansas women, particularly those in sod houses, managed to refine their domestic space with the material possessions that represented middle-class elegance. Kwolek-Folland seeks to examine "women's *cultural* role on the frontier in relation to the *physical domestic space* which women occupied and the objects with which they surrounded themselves."<sup>11</sup>

Beyond simply reproducing the institutions associated with American civilization, women first sought the refinement of domestic space and personal behavior. Kwolek-Folland has described how Plains women initially "'domesticated' the frontier, and linked it to other areas of the nation, by their awareness and use in the home of commonly-accepted cultural symbols."<sup>12</sup> Specific "cultural symbols" included domestic enhancements and material representations of refinement; it was primarily through these methods that women first sought to civilize their Plains environment. The attention to "created living spaces" helped

turn-of-the-century women in their "awareness of what it meant to be 'civilized.'" <sup>13</sup>

Building on the scholarship of Kwolek-Folland, this article explores a connectedness among women in many Plains states between 1880 and 1920 by analyzing not just material culture, but also behaviors, manners, literary culture, and the importance of separate physical spaces within the home. Further, the women described herein are united by the shared experiences of extreme rural hardship, while still managing to reproduce their own versions of domestic "vernacular gentility." Beyond just the physical objects of refinement that have been highlighted by historians, other aspects of domestic refinement—unique to this essay—provide a more complete picture of women's influence. These include the symbolic and ethereal uses of light, spatial separation, the softening of hard surfaces, and also the representations of gentility that came through letter writing, polite conversation, and literary and musical culture.

This essay focuses primarily on Euro-American women who lived in extremely rural and difficult conditions in the Great Plains between 1880 and 1920. Included are mostly white, American-born women, but also Russian-Jewish immigrants and English homesteading ranchers in eastern Montana.<sup>14</sup> Among the female settlers cited here, the focus is on women who lived at least fifteen to twenty-five miles from the nearest town and were without steady contact with other humans or the amenities of town life. While it is impossible and perhaps even unnecessary to quantify the socioeconomic status of the women represented, it is more important to acknowledge their desires—apparent through their own behavior and words—to achieve the appearance of middle-class cultural refinement. Plains women were cognizant of middle-class expectations and actively sought to reproduce the physical and ideological symbols of refinement in their new environments. Most of the women cited here lived in simple dwellings made of sod or log homes for only a brief period of their early Plains living, and

then later moved into sturdier homes that represented greater affluence. Regardless of their country of origin and socioeconomic status, these Great Plains women were connected by their immediate desires for refinement and middle-class respectability in the midst of harsh Plains life. Further, the theory of vernacular gentility, as applied to rural Plains women's experiences, can be used to understand the specific influence of other rural women in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. Women's desires for respectable gentility—through domestic improvements and civilizing behavior—became even more pronounced in the midst of harsh conditions, especially as they attempted to refine their rural places.

#### ENCOUNTERING THE RURAL AND PRIMITIVE

Historians have successfully demonstrated that women were *not* the passive, reluctant settlers to the Plains as has been stereotyped. Still, women often encountered circumstances that drew reactions of shock, horror, and indignation. Willingness to settle in the Plains did not always mean a willingness to accept the conditions that they encountered there, especially regarding the home space. While natural events like droughts, blizzards, hailstorms, and grasshopper epidemics were certainly beyond settlers' control, women expressed greater defiance when they encountered domestic living conditions that they considered base or vile. Glenda Riley has described how Plains women often "filled their diaries and journals with lamentations concerning the keeping of a 'proper' home environment in the crude housing that most of them were forced to cope with, at least during their first years on the Plains."<sup>15</sup> The following anecdotes introduce how a few Plains women first encountered difficult rural conditions, and from there sought to "maintain certain standards" of refinement.

In 1895 a young mail-order bride, Rachel Bella Kahn, arrived in rural Ramsey County,



North Dakota, where she and her fiancé, Abraham Calof, prepared to homestead in north-central North Dakota. The Calof homestead was located twenty-five miles from the nearest town, Devils Lake. The Calofs were met at the railroad by his brothers and some nieces. Rachel's first response suggested the shock she felt upon encountering less-than-genteel conditions or ones that were beneath her standards of refinement. On meeting her nieces, "Doba and Sarah," Rachel remarked, "The appearance of these girls was truly shocking. They wore men's shoes and a rough looking garment. Only common peasants wore such clothes in Russia. I was dismayed to see such attire worn by Jewish women. It was indecent."<sup>16</sup> According to Rachel's high ideals, poverty and distance should not preclude a person from behaving in a refined manner, or at least appearing refined. She scoffed that even her brothers-in-law were "dirty and unkempt," with "wild unshaven faces. Their skin was broken out in big pimples and they wore rags wrapped around their feet in place of shoes." In the family's simple attempt to put on a show of respectability for the new bride, "the women had no shoes at all but were wearing the men's shoes this day in my honor."<sup>17</sup>

To Rachel, financial achievement had little bearing upon one's ability to achieve respectability: "Poor as I had been all my life, I had always worn a dress like any self-respecting Jewish woman."<sup>18</sup> In spite of this early idealism, Rachel now found herself in unique circumstances—in a distant and rural place, twenty-five miles from the nearest town, with little access to material comforts. Any shock she had felt at meeting her nieces was soon outdone by the horror of seeing her new homestead.

This was my first sight of what awaited me as a pioneer woman. The furniture consisted of a bed, a rough table made of wood slats, and two benches. The place was divided up into two sections, the other being the kitchen which held a stove and beside it a heap of dried cow dung. When I

inquired about this, I was told that this was the only fuel this household had. They had no firewood at all.<sup>19</sup>

Again, Rachel's idealism and indignation reacted to these meager circumstances with a solemn resolve that she would never live with these base conditions. "What a terrible way to live. I silently vowed that my home would be heated by firewood and that no animal waste would litter my floor." However, even respectable women, when faced with severe primitivism, had to begin at a basic survival level; Rachel's retrospective writings allowed her the privilege of hindsight: "How little I knew. How innocent I was."<sup>20</sup>

Over the next few months and years, the Calofs' circumstances improved very little. Like many pioneer women, Rachel experienced the hardships of near-starvation and a harsh environment, plus the simplest furniture of wood slabs and straw mattresses, dirt floors, remote wells, uninsulated walls, and the worst imaginable conditions for giving birth. She likened the conditions of the Calof family to that of animals:

I surveyed my dreary surroundings. How could these people, unwashed, with little to eat, dressed in tatters, coarse and illiterate, escape the doom which already held them by the throat? The holes in the walls and roof of the place were stuffed with bits of paper in hopes of keeping some of the flies out. . . . There was no outhouse or latrine. Each one simply picked a place in the prairie grass.<sup>21</sup>

Rachel lamented that "I had tried so hard to raise myself to a decent life but my way seemed ever downward until now my existence was hardly above the level of an animal." Like many respectable women who moved to the rural Great Plains, Rachel found herself living in survival mode: "Our lives were uncomplicated. Our purpose was survival, and through survival the hope that somehow the future would treat us more kindly than had our past."<sup>22</sup> This

bleakness was only exacerbated by the extreme isolation: "There were no other homes to be seen on the vast expanse of the great plain. Except for one family, the only people who lived within miles were the Calofs."<sup>23</sup> In those conditions, Rachel could hardly expect to achieve the refinement and gentility expected of a proper Jewish woman. However, she soon wasted little time in trying to improve her conditions to a respectable level, by attempting simple and vernacular forms of gentility on her rural homestead.

In 1898 new bride Grace Fairchild also encountered similarly remote circumstances when she moved to the homestead of her husband, Shiloh Fairchild. Grace disembarked the train in Fort Pierre, South Dakota, where "the railroad ended." There she met "Shy," who waited to take her "to the new home ninety miles west, near the present town of Philip."<sup>24</sup> While Shy drove her to the homestead twenty-seven miles northwest of Philip, Grace encountered similar scenes as those met by Rachel Calof. "The sod shacks and log houses along the trail looked dismal, and I wondered if the women who lived in them had any happiness." To Grace, the distinction between the civilization they left behind and the bleakness they now entered was quite pronounced: "Here we were leaving settlements with frame houses, churches and good farm land going into a desolate unknown."<sup>25</sup>

Grace also encountered settler families who had reduced themselves to the harshness of the Plains environment. Grace remembered that one family of ten "and their three dogs looked more like a bunch of mangy calves than human beings on the homestead frontier."<sup>26</sup> The Fairchilds' own cabin was simple, only "twelve by fourteen foot," and was "part logs and part frame," but Grace admired that the home was "airy and nice in the warm months." However, the winter caused the logs to "shrink and the chinking of mud and manure would fall away, leaving cracks big enough for a good blast of snow and freezing cold . . . to come rough."<sup>27</sup> As desperate as the Fairchilds' situation was, some of Grace's neighbors fared much



FIG. 2. Bonnie, Muirl, and Faye Dorrough, Greene County, Indiana, 1910, around the time of their immigration to the Nebraska Sandhills. Courtesy of David E. Radke, Elizabeth, Illinois.

worse: "Life in a dugout was about as sorry a situation as a human could endure. It was snug in the winter, but when it rained, the water ran into the dugout and the floor was a mud puddle." One homesteader's bed was "a pile of straw in one corner which he shared with his dog." Regarding one neighbor family of "seven boys and one girl," Grace wondered "[h]ow they all lived in that little hole in the ground is a puzzle to me."<sup>28</sup>

In the summer of 1910, Muirl Dorrough left Greene County, Indiana, with her family to settle in the Sandhills of west-central Nebraska. Muirl's father, William, claimed a 640-acre Kincaid parcel in rural southwestern Cherry County with his wife, Margaret, and their daughters, Muirl, Bonnie, Faye, and Allie.

Having lost most of their wealth in Indiana, the Dorroughs immediately moved into a "soddy" and found themselves trying to eke out a living on their remote homestead. Muirl quickly took up teaching at a rural school in order to supplement the family income. In her letters to her fiancé and future husband, Harry Shimmin—also from the Sandhills—Muirl often expressed her personal desires and attitudes for domestic refinement and civilized behavior, in spite of the extremely rural and difficult conditions of the Nebraska Sandhills. Like Rachel Calof and Grace Fairchild, Muirl Dorrough encountered an environment foreign and unwelcoming to her, but still she understood the values of middle-class American civilization and sought to reproduce the expectations of domestic refinement in the Great Plains.<sup>29</sup>

#### CLEANING AND LIGHTING THE PHYSICAL SPACES

Beyond their attempts to seek respectable privacy, rural Plains women also sought to gentrify their domestic spaces so that even basic necessities became symbols of higher aspirations. Cleanliness, efficiency, and a healthy home were the first steps toward achieving this. One Iowa domestic science professor instructed her future farm-wife students that "[t]he ventilation must be provided for when the walls are going up. Better far dispense with a parlor, with carpets even, and fine furniture for a time, than neglect these. They are vital to your health."<sup>30</sup> Students were taught to first seek for healthy drainage, water, sanitation, light, and ventilation, because through cleanliness and order, young women could rise above the primitive difficulties of the rural agricultural setting. Only after a ranch or farm wife had made habits of efficient cleanliness could she then add refining touches to her simple home with plants, furniture, curtains, and carpets.

The adaptations necessary for Plains homesteading sometimes limited the possibilities of a clean environment. Long distances to wells

made collecting water difficult and time consuming. Constant wind, dust, dirt, and animals in close proximity to the house made cleanliness a daunting goal. And yet, sanitation became even more pronounced as a mark of refinement in these circumstances. As Muirl Dorrough's family began adapting to life in a "soddy" in the Nebraska Sandhills, Muirl's mother insisted that her four daughters wear gloves when collecting dried animal dung for fuel. This simple act showed how women tried to create distinct physical boundaries between themselves and the often vulgar conditions of Plains life. For most women, cleanliness also meant constant sweeping of the sod floors, chinking between the wall boards, and whitewashing the interior board or sod walls for a smoother, cleaner look.

Nellie Perry first visited her bachelor brother George in 1888 at his Texas Panhandle homestead, and she expressed shock at the appearance of his sod house: "Although not expecting a palace, I was somewhat stunned by the picture of the home. . . . Strips of carpet taking the place of doors and windows made the outlook still more desolate."<sup>31</sup> The place had much the feel of a bachelor pad, with "walls . . . festooned with ropes and harness" and piles of clothing and paper under the bed. George's furnishings were simple; Nellie noted that the "floor was of earth and in fact the evidences of luxury were few." She immediately went to work trying to clean the one-room, twelve-by-fourteen-foot "soddie," but "though I raised a great dust and stirred things up generally, after two or three hours of hard work no great change was visible."<sup>32</sup>

For Rachel Calof in North Dakota, the first step toward raising the living standard in her homestead was to create light. Rachel showed creativity in her attempts to achieve this important aspect of refined space.

As night approached I told the old lady [Abraham's mother] that I . . . would try to bring light into the shack. I went outside to see what materials nature might provide for my project, and soon found some partly



dried mud which I molded into a narrow container. I shaped a wick out of a scrap of rag, smeared it with butter, placed it in the mud cup, and lit it and lo and behold, there was light. Everyone was delighted with my invention. Now we could retire at a more reasonable hour.

The importance of this invention for refining her space was not lost on Rachel. She proudly noted, "Now we were able to undress and prepare for bed in a civilized way. This accomplishment stands out in my mind as the first result of my effort to climb out of the mire which surrounded me."<sup>33</sup> In the process of refining rural domestic places, bringing light was of primary importance, particularly as "a sensory metaphor for genteel society, rivaling polish and smoothness."<sup>34</sup>

#### SMOOTHING AND COVERING: SOFTENING THE ROUGH EDGES OF RURAL LIVING

First on many Plains women's lists for softening the interior environment was to cover the windows. Photographs of rural Plains families in eastern Montana, taken by famed Montana photographer Evelyn Cameron, show the importance of curtains to even the simplest structure. A German Russian woman's one-room wood home on the eastern Montana Plains showed white lace curtains distinctively contrasted against the simple, unpainted boards. Other Cameron photographs of rural Montana families often represented a vernacular refinement as simple dwellings were adorned with lace curtains, hammocks, and basic furnishings.<sup>35</sup> Glenda Riley has noted that "[o]ddly enough, curtains seemed to be a particular mark of civilization to thousands of plainswomen who took great pride in having them hanging at the few windows they had." When cotton or lace was lacking, women used simple materials like newspaper, cheesecloth, or recycled clothing and bedding, and one woman even used her "precious white cambric wedding petticoat" to dress her "soddie window."<sup>36</sup> Rachel Calof showed just such inge-

nuity when, only a short time after moving to North Dakota, she "made fine curtains for the windows from flour sacks."<sup>37</sup> With better materials available to her, Muir Dorrough's marital preparations in 1913 included "green window sashes with fringe, White curtains, [and] sash curtains for the kitchen."<sup>38</sup>

Next on many women's agenda for refining their physical space was to smooth the interior walls of the home and to provide a whitewash or wallpaper finish. Rachel Calof used the clayish mud—extracted from digging a new cellar under the house—to "fill the cracks in the walls and to make them smoother." Further, she hoped to "get some whitewash with which to paint the walls." These actions only added to Rachel's hopes for refined space: "My ambition soared. I could already visualize how clean and pretty my home would be."<sup>39</sup> With the help of her husband, Rachel mixed and kneaded a clay mixture, then "I worked the moistened clay onto the walls, between the slabs, making a smooth inner finish over the rough boards. Finishing, I surveyed the result. A miracle had taken place. *Our rude shanty had become a palace.*"<sup>40</sup> Whitewashing the walls had added a genteel softness to Rachel's home, symbolically raising her home from a "rude shanty" to a "palace."

Plains women also used simple forms of wallpaper for covering and smoothing the rough board walls of their homes. When trying to improve her South Dakota cabin, Grace Fairchild eventually "covered the logs with paper and siding and lined the kitchen walls with wall board."<sup>41</sup> This was accomplished only over the objections of her husband, who always seemed reluctant to participate in domestic, internal improvements. Later, Grace helped a neighbor woman paper her home. She used "blue building paper" which she "tacked . . . down tight" over the older wall covering made of "old burlap," which also had to "be stretched tight and tacked down."<sup>42</sup> Although done with simple materials, the process of papering rough walls added a softened look of refinement that Plains women desired. Smoothness of fabrics and other materials



FIG. 3. Rosie Rosier's [Roessler] homestead, Montana, August 1913. Courtesy of the Evelyn Cameron Collection (PAC 90-87.68-1), Montana State Historical Society, Helena.

became a mark of genteel culture, particularly because the "feel of coarse cloth [or materials] was associated with the lower ranks of society and with rude personal traits. . . . By the same token, 'polished' and 'polite' linked smooth fabric with well-finished personal qualities." Americans recognized smoothness as "an essential trait of all beautiful things," and so Plains women sought to smooth the surfaces of their domestic space by wallpapering, whitewashing, and covering with any available fabrics on hand.<sup>43</sup>

Fabrics, window coverings, tablecloths and bedding—even when made from crude and local materials—were important additions to any vernacular refined home in the rural Great Plains. Nineteenth-century Americans used various strategies of *décor* for "heightening refinement," which included "softening, cushioning, and harmonizing the parlor through the profuse use of fabrics—a material analogy

to the role of etiquette in smoothing away potential rudeness and angularity."<sup>44</sup> Whereas most Plains families did not yet claim a "parlor" as part of the interior domestic space, women used fabrics and coverings to soften the roughness of "soddies," cabins, and other simple homes. Even when elegant coverings remained unattainable for Plains families, women used any available resources to give the impressions of refined upholstery.

More commonly, however, women first sought to cover windows, tables, and beds with whatever materials lay at hand. For Rachel Calof, even the conditions of her childbirths improved from when she first delivered her babies on piles of straw; she later felt blessed to deliver on the table "with a clean cloth on top." The addition of a clean cloth to her delivery bed was worth noting in her memoir, because it added a softening effect that she had not enjoyed in the early years of child-



FIG. 4. Ida Archdale in the sitting room of her ranch house, "Castle Archdale," Montana, c. 1907. Courtesy of the Evelyn Cameron Collection (PAC 90-87.95), Montana State Historical Society, Helena.

bearing under harsher conditions.<sup>45</sup> For most women, tablecloths also helped to soften the kitchen and eating environment, especially as many families ate on rough planks laid across stumps or even on the floor if no furniture was available. At her marriage to Abraham Calof, Rachel received a "red felt tablecloth with green flowers," used to cover the "rough table made of wood slats" that she encountered as one of the only pieces of furniture in her North Dakota homestead.<sup>46</sup>

Plains women understood the importance of upholstering their coarse homes, and then helped others achieve refinement by giving gifts of embroideries, linens, and other cloth coverings. For helping with her neighbor's whitewashing, Grace Fairchild received a gift of two pillowcases, which she still had thirty years later.<sup>47</sup> In 1913 Muirl Dorrrough made a cushion for her future mother-in-law, with a

"conventional design. The colors are shades of yellow and green."<sup>48</sup> Muirl acquired other types of fabric upholsteries as part of her wedding preparations in late 1913, including window coverings and a floor rug. Mari Sandoz, in her revealing biography of her father, *Old Jules*, remembered that in spite of the physical hardness and wear of Plains living endured by her mother in her early years of marriage, she still managed to appropriate small elements of refinement. Mrs. Mary Sandoz had "lost her teeth; her skin became leathery from field work, and her eyes paled and sun-squinted; her hands knotted, the veins of her arms like slack clothesline." Yet even in this unfeminine harshness, Mary "used clean linen tablecloths for Sunday and company, and had a fringed spread on her bed every day."<sup>49</sup>

Some rural Plains women took the use of fabric and upholstery to the highest level of



Victorian gentrification. Evelyn Cameron's photograph of her British immigrant neighbor Ida Archdale, in her eastern Montana ranch home, showed the extent to which some Plains women sought to achieve upholstered gentility. Ida's home included fringed bedspreads, coverlets, pillows, door draperies (also with fringes), and numerous lace and embroidered pillows, chair drapes, and fabric frame covers for gilded portraits. The Archdales' home even claimed a bellpull "perhaps to remind them of a more civilized world where there would be a parlor maid to answer a ring."<sup>50</sup> As a further indication of Monty and Ida Archdale's expectations for gentrified living on the Montana Plains, they named their ranch "Castle Archdale."

#### REFINEMENT THROUGH SPATIAL SEPARATION: SEEKING PRIVACY AND ORDER

For Rachel Calof, Grace Fairchild, and Muirl Dorrough, an interesting paradox of the unrefined Plains life occurred when people endured both remote isolation and also extreme overcrowding. When Rachel discovered that she would have to live all winter with Abraham's parents, brothers, and their families in a one-room shack, she loudly protested that "what I was seeing was probably the greatest hardship of pioneer life, the terrible crowding of many people into a small space."<sup>51</sup> Grace Fairchild mocked the crowded living of her poorest neighbors, but applauded when one family later built an addition, because "for the first time [they] could sleep the family without stacking them up like cordwood."<sup>52</sup> For Rachel, the starkest reality of overcrowded conditions was the restrictions on sexual intimacy with her husband.

I must confess that the one hardship which was always unacceptable to me through the formative years was the lack of privacy. For many months of each of those years Abe and I had to find our privacy on the open prairie, and even in later years we had to hold our personal conversations in the barn.

Rachel's greatest desire was for personal space, separated from the intrusions of her extended family. "In those precarious winters of the first years when so many people, and animals as well, huddled together in a tiny space, my yearning was not for a larger shack but rather for the dignity of privacy."<sup>53</sup>

Nighttime privacy became a hallmark of nineteenth-century refinement, especially as Americans departed from the eighteenth-century practice of bedding many people in one bed or room. For instance, in order to create a separate and safer sleeping place for her baby daughter, Rachel Calof fashioned a makeshift hammock "from a flour sack which I suspended from the ceiling over our bed."<sup>54</sup> Whereas in this situation, a hammock helped to uncrowd the family's congested sleeping conditions, hammocks in the Plains were also used much as eastern Americans used them, for outdoor leisure and relaxation. Nellie Perry remarked upon seeing a hammock outside of one sod house "swung under a rudely made awning of cornstalks or sugar cane" that it "reminded her of civilization."<sup>55</sup> A hammock not only added separated sleeping space to overcrowded Plains homes, but also provided a spark of leisured culture to the rural environment.

Further, as nineteenth-century Americans sought to delineate their private spaces, "[e]ach space carried its own specific requirements of self-discipline and emotional management in accordance with the activities and roles to be performed, the intimate no less than the social. . . . [Americans] pursued sexuality within a context of moderation, self-control, and, above all, privacy."<sup>56</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, most Americans were successful in cordoning off various private spaces within the domestic sphere, and parents "increasingly slept apart from children . . . so that privacy could be protected."<sup>57</sup> Privacy and dignity were so important to Muirl Dorrough, that, in referring to the bedroom in the new two-room home built by her fiancé, she wouldn't even call it by name; instead, it was

"the room, not called the kitchen."<sup>58</sup> Since so many rural homesteading women could not afford the luxury of intimate spaces, they sought that level of refinement by seeking privacy in other places, like barns, outbuildings, and even the great outdoors.

For both efficiency and for refinement, the improvement of kitchen space was an important step in refinement of rural Plains homes. For the upper classes, a sideboard—or standing cupboard—"allowed the family to store and display the expanding array of silver and dishes."<sup>59</sup> To rural Plains settlers, any simple cupboard helped to properly exhibit tableware. Rachel Calof, rather than allowing her few dishes to be stacked on the floor or table, built a makeshift cupboard. She used what was available, by nailing "a newly acquired apple box to the wall to keep my dishes in."<sup>60</sup> Grace Fairchild also sought the efficiency and refinement of properly stored dishes. After years of waiting without results for her husband to improve the kitchen, Fairchild's fifteen-year-old son Jasper declared, "Mamma, if you will tell me what you want done, I will do it for you." Together, mother and son began a home construction project; they "moved the chimney from the middle of the room to the side of the house, then changed the stairway, *built in cupboards*, and made much more room."<sup>61</sup> In 1913 the first item of furniture that Muirl Dorrough listed in her wish list for a new home was a "Kitchen cabinet—with top and places for dishes."<sup>62</sup> Spatial organization allowed Plains women the feeling and appearance of order and sophistication.

Part of the improvements made on Grace Fairchild's house involved the expansion of the kitchen area to create a semi-separate dining space in the home. After a few years of marriage and childbearing, "the house was getting pretty crowded with our family. We needed to add some rooms. . . . We had enclosed part of the old porch earlier and this became a part of the kitchen, which *enlarged it into a kitchen-dining room combined*."<sup>63</sup> By partially separating the dining space from the main kitchen area, Grace Fairchild added a signifi-

cant element to the refinement of her home. John Kasson noted that "[b]ecause the act of dining bore such high ritual stakes among the middle classes, it needed to be performed in protected circumstances."<sup>64</sup> Indicating the expectations that Muirl Dorrough felt in achieving a proper home, she requested that Harry purchase a "dining table and chairs." And even though she worried about feeling "crowded" in the two-room house, Muirl expanded her wish list of necessary furnishings for respectable living, including a "wash stand, white iron bed, dresser and two rocking chairs."<sup>65</sup> It was in a family's best genteel interests to acquire a formal dining space, because according to one early architect, "It is the custom with some farmers to make a constant practice of taking all meals in the kitchen; but this habit marks a low state of civilization."<sup>66</sup>

Many poorer Plains families could not afford the luxury of a completely separate dining space or extra rooms, but still managed to improve and add upon their homes as they acquired the resources to do so. When Nellie Perry arrived at her brother George's sod homestead in the rural Texas panhandle, they made a joint visit to his neighbors. Nellie remembered that "[o]n the inside the one huge room was divided into kitchen and sitting room combined with bedroom by means of a rag carpet upon the floor of the latter, the kitchen being carpeted with earth."<sup>67</sup> By separating off a faux "sitting room" in their sod house, the Bates had attempted to create an important space for Victorian refinement—the parlor. The nineteenth-century parlor allowed for genteel Americans to create a separate space designed for leisure and cultured activities.<sup>68</sup> True to its purpose, the Bates's "sitting room" contained comfortable furnishings and "bookcases, etc., sunk into the thick sod walls. . . . I was surprised to find that a sod house could be made so pleasant and homelike."<sup>69</sup> The delineation of physical domestic spaces helped rural Plains settlers to achieve privacy, efficiency, and the cultural refinement of purpose-specific rooms like parlors, separate bedrooms, and dining areas.

Although many settlers encountered brief periods of rough conditions in soddies, lean-tos, or shanties, most settlers who aspired to middle-class refinement and comfort eventually built entirely new structures, complete with additional rooms and space for new furniture. According to Glenda Riley, this transition usually occurred within the first year, after which additions were added or families built entirely new structures. As Muirl Dorrough prepared for her marriage to Harry Shimmin, she dreamed out loud: "Do you think a three room house would be all right for us? And a front porch too?"<sup>70</sup> A new frame home was within the realm of wishful aspirations for the young couple, but they eventually settled for a two-room home, with no porch. Muirl's wishes for a "front porch" showed her desires for that important extension of domestic refined space. A porch could serve as "an outdoor parlor with furniture for supporting conversation." For Plains farmers and ranchers, a porch could also demarcate the space between the civilized domestic space and the farm and animal areas. "The porch and fenced yard extended the refined space outward from the parlor while fixing a boundary between the genteel portions of the house and the working barnyard to the rear."<sup>71</sup> Plains women extended their domestic refinement outward from the central home space by adding hammocks, bird cages, hanging flowers, potted plants, and flowerbeds close to the house as exterior expressions of refinement. Besides planting vegetables, Grace Fairchild always "planted flowers in the garden so we could cut them and brighten up the house with them."<sup>72</sup>

A frame home was an important objective for far-reaching Plains settlers. With lumber that he had acquired on credit, Abraham Calof built a new frame home for Rachel, thus allowing them the luxury of private space—separate from their extended family. So excited were they to have their own space that they moved in before the home's completion, and Rachel again invoked the language of gentility to describe her new surroundings: "Even though it only had a few boards for a ceiling,

to me it was the loveliest palace in the world."<sup>73</sup> Further, with more space and expanded finances, the Calofs furnished their new home with furniture purchased "in town" and Rachel marveled that "[f]or a long time I felt I must be dreaming to actually have real furniture." The importance of this achievement spoke specifically to the Calofs' desires for gentrification in their rural sphere, for Rachel noted that "[e]ven though we still endured many hardships and disadvantages, in other ways we were progressing toward a more civilized life."<sup>74</sup> By 1910 Rachel was able to brag that the "farm was prosperous and many times the size of the original claims. . . . We were now prominent and respected throughout North Dakota."<sup>75</sup> After moving into a frame home, many Plains families could eventually achieve full status by building homes in the respectable architectural styles of the day, as when Harry Shimmin's family first built a sod house on their Sandhills ranch, then replaced it with a two-story Victorian Queen Anne frame, and finally built a solid modern bungalow, which still stands on the Dunwell Ranch.

#### ACHIEVING REFINEMENT THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE

The process of gentrifying rural Plains homes was further facilitated by the availability of mass-produced goods through the expanding mail-order catalog system of the late nineteenth century. Two major companies dominated the market for mail-order goods—Montgomery Ward, pioneered in 1872, and Sears and Roebuck, established in 1886. After first marketing to cities and towns that were accessible by mail delivery in the 1880s and 1890s, both companies expanded their business to rural farm areas.<sup>76</sup> For Great Plains settlers in the early years, material goods were only available through railroad access to towns, often at far distances from the settlers' homes.

Grace Fairchild and Rachel Calof saw railroad access arrive late; in their early homesteading years, they had to travel great distances just to purchase any manufactured



goods necessary for home refinement. Still, when the railroad finally arrived closer to the Fairchilds, Grace rejoiced that "[t]he rails now connected me with everything I knew before I went West—my sisters, my parents, and store goods—and some of the lonesomeness began to go away."<sup>77</sup> Harry Shimmin remembered that his mother once went for six years without traveling into town—either Mullen, Nebraska, twenty-five miles north of the Dunwell Ranch, or Tryon, fifteen miles south. Although by 1890 more than three-fourths of Americans still "had to go to the nearest post office to get their mail," the catalog-ordering system helped to reduce this isolation.<sup>78</sup> In spite of the inconvenience of waiting for purchased goods to arrive in the West, Grace Fairchild remembered that "[w]hen you live ninety miles from a town, a Montgomery Ward or Sears Roebuck catalogue gets read more than the Bible or Shakespeare."<sup>79</sup> Fairchild's symbolic placement of material culture above religious or literary culture showed the importance of purchased goods to a Plains woman's sense of refinement and connectedness to the larger American society. One Wyoming ranch wife subscribed to the Montgomery Ward catalog for years, beginning in 1885, and remarked "that it was 'impossible to exaggerate the importance of the part played by this book of wonder' . . . [for] her family."<sup>80</sup>

After 1893 the mail-order catalog business became more effective in bringing middle-class American culture to the doorsteps of rural Plains ranchers and farmers. Since Chicago was the hub of rail activity, the Sears and Roebuck Company moved there in 1893, thus making catalog goods available in any Plains town that had a rail stop. Additionally, the company's ability to reach out to distant housewives was accelerated by the founding of the rural free delivery (RFD) system in 1893. RFD offered government-subsidized rural mail delivery to remote homesteads, although in the beginning RFD delivered only mail and not packages. So settlers could read and order from the catalog they had received through RFD, but still had to go to the nearest post office to

collect their packages, or perhaps benefit from neighbors' generosity in bringing ordered goods around to farms. Not until 1913 and the addition of parcel post delivery to the RFD system could women have their packages actually delivered to them at home.

Further, catalog companies made ordering faster and cheaper by adding regional warehouses, which served as hubs of economic exchange in a system of disseminating middle-class gentility to rural women throughout the Great Plains. So when Muirl Dorrough announced in 1913 that the items she had ordered for her new home would "come from Kansas City," she gave a nod to Montgomery Ward's large Kansas City warehouses, the first completed in 1904, and a "nine-story plant . . . erected in 1907."<sup>81</sup> During these important years of US Postal Service expansion, catalog companies capitalized on the new markets, and rural consumers in turn benefited from the greater availability of home and farm commodities. These goods added ease and efficiency to farmers' lives, but more importantly brought the materials of American refinement to rural homes. According to Lorin Sorenson,

Isolated homesteaders on the prairies of the mid-West would become the mainstay of early Sears, Roebuck business . . . [which] provided household goods and sod-busting implements that helped raise their standard of living.<sup>82</sup>

The commodification of gentility through mail-order catalogs successfully brought middle-class refinement to the doorsteps of average Plains settlers. Through these catalogs, men and women could improve their homes, add material luxuries, and even expand their physical space by ordering lumber, more rooms, and even entire houses.

Dishes, china, and silverware became important marks of gentrification in Great Plains homes that otherwise suffered from simplicity and shortages. Silver, serving dishes, and dining-room furniture were necessities for rural housewives, because "such furnishings became

tokens of status and refinement to strive for by those on the lower rungs of the middle class."<sup>83</sup> For her marriage in February of 1914, Muirl Dorrough received "1/2 dozen tea towels and a lovely Japanese cake plate" and a silver sugar bowl and creamer. Muirl planned to fit other elegant household items into the couple's two-room home, including "silver ware French gray pattern, white set of dinner dishes trimmed in gold bands, Blue and white kitchen ware."<sup>84</sup> Grace Fairchild described how one neighbor claimed he would only lock the house because his wife had "quite a bit of silverware which she thinks ought to be protected from people who don't live around in this country."<sup>85</sup> Even among poor or middle-class Plains settlers, silverware was a necessary possession for a family's personal sense of refinement, because since the early part of the nineteenth century, "silver flatware had gone from being a luxury associated with the nobility to a ubiquitous necessity among the middle class."<sup>86</sup>

The use of china and silver in creating an elegant dining space was paramount to refining the simple dwellings of female Plains settlers; so when Nellie Perry visited the neighbors' sod home with her brother, Perry paid particular attention to the simple western meal of pork and beans served "on pretty blue and white china."<sup>87</sup> One Kansas newlywed, recently moved to a sod home in 1887, enjoyed dinner at a neighbor's soddy and noted that "the table was really elegant with nice linen and silverware."<sup>88</sup> For many rural women, often the only mark of refinement they could claim was a fine set of china or silverware, perhaps gifted, inherited, or purchased. While packing for a move to the Plains, one couple disagreed over the inclusion of the wife's Haviland china among the items to be packed. The wife "clung to the china with despair and heartbreak in her face." Finally, the husband relented and the china came with the family, significant to the mother because the "dishes were more even than beauty; they were 'a tangible link' to the refinements of civilized living that would be difficult to re-create in the 'rugged frontier condition' that so attracted her father."<sup>89</sup> Truly, civilization found

its place on Plains dinner tables, because "Brutes feed, the best barbarian only eats. Only the cultured man can dine."<sup>90</sup>

#### ACHIEVING REFINEMENT THROUGH MUSICAL CULTURE

Besides kitchen possessions, other material goods for the home added to the image of rural refinement. Possessions might be imported from previous residences as visible remnants of a former, civilized life. Grace Fairchild noted that "[m]y mother had bought an Estey organ when I was ten years old, and when she broke up housekeeping the year I married Shy, she gave it to me." Grace's elegant organ remained an important symbol for her personal appropriation of gentility: "It was the only touch of elegance that we had on our ranch and I loved it for what it was, something beyond just making a living."<sup>91</sup> When Solomon Butcher photographed families in front of sod dwellings in Nebraska in the 1880s, most photo subjects brought out their domestic possessions for inclusion in the photos, in order to represent their middle-class culture to friends and neighbors who might view the images. The props were often purposefully included to suggest a family's material and cultural success—in spite of the roughness of sod house living. Possessions included birdcages, lace tablecloths, vases, china, potted flowers, and ornate framed portraits, but for many Plains settlers, the most universal symbol of cultured existence was a musical instrument, particularly an organ or piano. So when Mrs. Hilton posed her family with her elegant pump organ away from the sod house, she succeeded in displaying one of the most important symbols of refinement to her eastern relatives, in spite of embarrassing living conditions.<sup>92</sup>

Mail-order catalogs played a vital role in bringing musical accomplishment to rural homes. The availability of inexpensive pianos and organs especially served the refining intentions of rural homes, because "[t]o the housewife, the piano was a symbol of the East she had left; it stood for home and security,

the good life she hoped to build in the West. A lot of wives would junk other treasured possessions when the going got rough and the wagon bogged down, but they hung on to the piano."<sup>93</sup> To the Plains dwellers, a piano served as the center of the parlor, or it represented the central focus of a proper home, even if the home only had two rooms. But for those who could not afford one of the many piano and organ models offered by the catalog companies, both Montgomery Ward and Sears began selling smaller instruments such as violins, harmonicas, flutes, guitars, banjos, and "jew's harps" so that even the simplest dwelling had access to musical culture. Still the finest acquisition for any proper middle-class home was a keyboard instrument, and few would argue the worth of a piano or organ to Plains settlers, described by Angel Kwolek-Folland as "one of the signals which communicated culture and refinement, whether one lived in a dugout, a frame house, or . . . in a rented room in Junction City [Kansas]."<sup>94</sup>

Musical knowledge, talent, and the instruments themselves, whether brought from eastern homes or purchased and delivered through the mail, suggested an elevated level of cultured living for rural Plains dwellers. Muirl Dorrough remarked to Harry Shimmin in one letter that she and her sister would make a visit to Mrs. Charles Hoyt to see a new piano; "It just came in," she announced. Muirl's own school organ was the center of jovial social interaction, as one day "at the close of school . . . the ladies all came and brought such a nice lot of dinner. Then Mrs. Hansen played the organ and we all sang, about a dozen songs." Muirl's neighbors, the Doyles, were popular for social activity because their son Bruce could "play the piano and the violin."<sup>95</sup> Musical engagements were important marks of cultural gentility to rural settlers; they were to be shared with neighbors and often served as the centerpieces of social gatherings. The exchange of musical experiences helped to soften the edges of rural Plains life. In the western Sandhills of Nebraska, Henriette Sandoz, the third wife of Old Jules, brought a sense of refinement to

Jules's rural home. One day, when a rainstorm hit the simple house and the roof leaked, Henriette "sat on the wet straw tick all the next day with a purple umbrella over her head, crying noiselessly while Jules raged that there was no fuel." However, after a while of listening to the rain "bound off the umbrella," Henriette "laughed aloud" and declared, "It is like Chopin—'The Raindrop,' and she hummed a bit of it."<sup>96</sup> Jules appreciated the musical reference, and Henriette's cultural awareness brought a moment of civility to a difficult situation.

As Plains settlers gradually began to add to their material gentility, they were able to order fancier furnishings, dishes, musical instruments, and more elegant modes of transportation from eastern urban centers. Grace Fairchild bragged about her family's acquisition of a fringed surrey, which they had ordered by mail from Elkhart, Indiana. When it arrived, "it was a nifty affair with a fringe around the top and with side curtains. Such a beautiful thing couldn't be left out in the weather, so we built a machine shed and carriage house south of the house."<sup>97</sup> The material possessions of refined living—pianos, china, silver, and tablecloths—not only brought greater comfort to Plains women and their families, but also "told the world that a cultivated woman was present, one who understood and could communicate her cultural womanhood."<sup>98</sup>

#### CIVILITY, MANNERS, AND LITERARY CULTURE

Besides the outward symbols of refinement—material culture and purchased goods—rural Plains settlers also subscribed to larger expectations of civil behavior and manners as part of nineteenth-century determinants of refinement. Poor or middle-class Plains settlers could not afford the luxuries of elite American society, but they could still mark themselves with an assumed gentility by adopting the proper manners and behavior associated with the upper classes. Polite



behavior included such activities as letter writing, the use of proper addresses in communication, conversational and visiting etiquette, and the appropriation of literary culture.

Historians have examined the importance of educational institutions and literary societies to early rural Plains settlers. But even before the literary institutions and associations had been created, Plains settlers first sought cultured refinement in their homes by exhibiting, ordering, and reading their books—either purchased or brought from eastern homes. The presence of books in any home “remained . . . a badge of the gentry just as did refined manners and mode of dress; a large personal library testified to the gentry’s ability to . . . possess the education and leisure necessary to read widely.”<sup>99</sup> As printed materials became cheaper and more available to average Americans by the end of the nineteenth century, literacy and book ownership remained a mark of cultured education. Nellie Perry’s visit to the neighbors’ sod house showed that they had built bookshelves into the sod walls, and Muirl Dorrough took advantage of catalog ordering to acquire the latest books, including *Ben Hur*, *The Virginian*, George Eliot’s novels, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poetry. The appearance of literacy was an important staple for rural Plains settlers, and many sought improvement of their station through access to the latest reading materials.

Beyond just educational and narrative reading, rural Plains residents subscribed to larger notions of civilization by reading how-to manuals and etiquette books that offered suggestions for proper behavior. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw a prolific outpouring of these books, especially “among customers aspiring to gentility. [Publishers] complied or commissioned books wherein etiquette advice flowed over into tips on house-keeping, medical care, letter writing, child raising, business and legal forms, lessons in elocution and public speaking and miscellaneous matters.”<sup>100</sup> So when Muirl (after her marriage to Harry) ordered a copy of *How to Take Care of the Baby* from the Sears and Roe-

buck catalog, she not only sought practical information on childcare, but also aspired to grander expectations for the proper and civilized rearing of a family. Again, the impact of rural delivery and catalog ordering was immeasurable, as rural Plains women saw the ideals of American civilization delivered to their distant homes.

Through education and reading, rural settlers could absorb the larger expectations of American civilization. But in the extreme distances of the Great Plains, settlers worked to spread civilization through letter writing, which also showed their need for polite and civil correspondence. Letter writing maintained communication between distant ranches and farms, but most importantly perpetuated the language and manners of civilized American society. For early Americans, “letters served to enhance friendship and family ties . . . [but also] presented a refined spirit in the act of revealing its sensibility, its vivacity, and its delicacy.”<sup>101</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, letter writing was still an important medium for the exchange of polite, educated, and literary language. Letters also helped to disseminate the ideals of American civilization, expectations, and behavior. In the rural Plains, letter writing was a vital form of communication, as phone lines were expensive and impractical. Ranches served as local postal offices, and as in other middle-class communities throughout the United States, Plains residents exchanged letters, greeting cards, postcards, Valentines, and invitations to dinners and box socials. Letter writing helped to temper some of the lonesomeness that came with living in remote isolation, and symbolically reduced the distances between rural places. Muirl admitted, “It seems pretty lonely up here. I am so glad to get the letters and cards.”<sup>102</sup>

Letters also brought settlers together with a shared language of cultural identity, even if people lived miles from each other and the nearest town. Muirl Dorrough’s role as a letter writer showed the importance of what historians have called “epistolary community,”

or the transfer of ideas, cultural attitudes, and personal relations through letter writing. "Epistolary community" among rural Plains settlers served as a medium for transferring the elements of American civilization, especially manners, civility, and proper community interaction.<sup>103</sup> For instance, Muirl abided by the expectations of polite society by consistently using appropriate titles for neighbors and friends. While she did refer to children, peers, and relatives by first names, she more commonly addressed superiors, acquaintance, and other associations with polite titles of "Mr.," "Miss," and "Mrs." Muirl maintained a dignified respect for couples with whom she lived while she taught school; she held to the consistent use of titles such as "Mrs. Evans," "Mrs. Neal," and "Mrs. Upton," even if women were close to her own age. She also politely referred to her father's hired man as "Mr. Ballard." In the Texas Panhandle, Nellie Perry addressed neighbors, acquaintances, and new settlers as "Messrs. Bates and Whippo" and "Messrs. Stevens and Nelson of Missouri."<sup>104</sup> The use of respectful titles when addressing neighbors and acquaintances certainly held to the standards espoused in one nineteenth-century etiquette manual to never "lay aside the habit of addressing your friend as 'Mr. so-and-so,' and never to permit it to be laid aside by him. It will temper at all times the warmth of undue approach, and will enable you to check an occasional freedom by the immediate interposition of a shield."<sup>105</sup>

Muirl Dorrough's use of formal conversational discourse in her letters exposes a broader transplantation of gentility through language. In writing to her husband-to-be, Muirl often portrayed an affectionate familiarity; however, when she referred to troubling or uncomfortable situations, she remained dignified and emotionally self-controlling. On occasions when Harry's mother acted rudely toward her future daughter-in-law, Muirl managed to conserve a sense of decorum in the face of contention. After one particularly egregious accusation, Muirl simply complained to Harry that "I never had anything hurt me so before. . . . I could

not believe that she ever said any thing about us." And when Harry was attacked by a couple of ruffians, Muirl exhibited only a bit more excited protest: "I hope that those men get punished as they deserve. The cowardly fellows I should say to attack you in such an unfair way!"<sup>106</sup> Self-restraint was an important quality of civilized refinement, because "[o]f all emotions, anger most violently betrayed a loss of self-possession and irreparably shattered the spirit of civility."<sup>107</sup> So, instead of allowing the Plains environment to dictate greater informality or casual rudeness in personal relations, Muirl Dorrough and other women sought to perpetuate civil behavior and polite formality through conversation and letter writing. Muirl once reminded Harry, "I am very polite, I think." Through the discourses of letter writing and public behavior, Plains settlers helped to apply the civilized qualities of morality, polite behavior, and order to their rural places.

Plains settlers communicated through appropriate postal correspondence, which also served as a medium for initiating other social gatherings. Settlers sent and received invitations to dances, box socials, dinners, and other events. Plains women participated in the genteel social activity of "calling," as when Muirl reported that "Mrs. Upton and Mabel were to call on Mrs. Neal this afternoon." Muirl often attended dances and box socials, and of course, enjoyed dinners and visits with her fiancé, usually under the chaperoning gaze of her parents and sisters. Departing from her usual affectionate familiarity with Harry, Muirl once referred to his visit with a mock tone of superpolite discourse associated with interactions of earlier decades: "My dear sir, I will be quite honored to have you visit me."<sup>108</sup> On another occasion Muirl wrote, "Mamma and we girls were to a dinner party given for two ladies from Kansas. There were twenty-five ladies there and I don't know how many children."<sup>109</sup> These gatherings had to meet the standards for acceptable decorum. On one of Nellie Perry's trips to visit her brother George in Texas, they "went visiting" on a Sunday, which

Nellie marveled was "according to native custom." Nellie showed some disapproval at this breach of etiquette, and "though I questioned the propriety of Sunday visiting, I made few objections, and as early as we could dispatch breakfast and the little necessary work, we started for George's nearest neighbor." Nellie understood the significance of her own refining influence on her brother, and regretted that the "invitation had been received and accepted by George before I was consulted."<sup>110</sup>

#### ASPIRATIONS: THE LANGUAGE OF REFINEMENT

Rural Plains women aspired to genteel refinement of their physical spaces, even when harsh conditions restricted that process. Vernacular refinement remained so important to women settlers that the process of moving from simple to elegant caused women to create a genteel self-awareness in their own minds, or what Angel Kwolek-Folland has described as "an awareness on their part that the home could symbolize economic status." For example, after women had succeeded in refining their domestic space, they often "made allusion to themselves as aristocrats or 'queens.'"<sup>111</sup> As conditions improved and women achieved refinement, they described these successes by invoking the language of nobility and royalty. One Kansas homesteader in 1898, upon laying two carpets brought from New York in her rural Kansas "cottonwood shack," felt "quite aristocratic" for the elegant additions to her rude living space.<sup>112</sup>

At Rachel Calof's marriage to Abe, the prepared food was simple but, in her mind, still deserving of the title "feast." Following her son's bris (circumcision) ceremony, the supper was not merely a meal, but a "truly magnificent banquet."<sup>113</sup> Any improvements on the Calofs' home caused Rachel to put forth particularly lofty descriptions of her conditions: thus, the "rude shanty" became a "palace." And although the Calofs' second home "only had a few boards for a ceiling," to Rachel it was "the loveliest palace in the world. I was

overwhelmed with joy at the prospect of bringing my family into such spacious quarters."<sup>114</sup> Rachel's son Jacob remembered his mother with the dignity and refinement she had sought all of her life: "The most vivid memory I treasure of her was the lovely picture she presented wearing her immaculate white apron over her best dress in her warm, spotless house, making her blessing over the Sabbath candles each Friday evening. *How noble and regal she looked.*"<sup>115</sup> Muirl Dorrough also suggested a noble self-identity, when after receiving a bracelet from Harry, she gushed, "I certainly like my bracelet. *I wear it only on state occasions.* So you see I am trying to take proper care of it."<sup>116</sup> By implementing the language of nobility when describing their domestic successes, Plains women suggested the importance of refinement—however simple—in producing American civilization in the rural environment.

Perhaps Nellie Perry aptly described the civilizing aspirations of Plains settlers best when she bragged that

[i]t goes without saying that the people of the Texas Panhandle are not only as honest and as industrious, but that *they possess culture and education equal to the average American citizen.*<sup>117</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

As women moved with their husbands and families into the hard environment of the Great Plains between 1880 and 1920, they sought refinement of their physical space—not after they had first achieved survival, but as an intricate and interwoven part of that survival process. Refinement meant that women created physical, behavioral, and cultural expressions of gentility and cultured living. Women's refining actions became a part of what Allen Pred has called "human geography." In local and regional transformation, "women and men make histories and produce places, not under circumstances of their own choosing, but in the context of already existing social and spatial



relations which both enable and constrain the purposeful conduct of life." Thus, Muirl Dorrough, Rachel Calof, Grace Fairchild, and Nellie Perry made their own histories, but within the structure of larger social, economic, and demographic connections. These women lived within the civilizing forces and institutions placed upon them, but also acted within those forces to perpetuate a sense of refined civilization particularly adapted to their Plains communities. This was significant: "[T]he daily reproduction of these institutionalized forms of sociability resulted in the personal accumulation of common knowledge, or in a deepening collective consciousness."<sup>118</sup>

The refining behavior and attitudes of Plains women became part of a "collective consciousness" of American civilization that extended beyond their isolated ranches. Through the processes of beautification, acculturation, and civilization that Plains women used to achieve refinement in their rural places, they "linked themselves to other women across the nation."<sup>119</sup> Between 1880 and 1920, rural Plains women adapted the forms of acceptable refinement—domestic enhancements, material culture, genteel behavior, manners, and spatial organization—in order to mark themselves against their harsh environments and thus reproduce the physical and ideological symbols of Euro-American civilization in the rural Great Plains.

#### NOTES

1. David Hilton Family, Solomon Butcher Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society, B983-3535, in John Carter, ed., *Solomon D. Butcher: Photographing the American Dream* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 55. See also <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/images/lib-arch/research/photos/47fs.jpg> (accessed February 3, 2004).

2. "Civilization" suggests the institutions, behavior and manners, symbols, and material culture that Euro-Americans sought in their daily living as representations of a connectedness to their larger national identity. Thus, American civilization by 1900 included the "ideas and practices" of society that could also spread to the remote places of the Great Plains, where settlers needed a way of cul-

turally marking themselves in a harsh land. See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 24.

3. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), vol. II, 2463.

4. Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Paperback Books, 1992), xii.

5. For more discussion on how Americans transplanted middle-class ideals as they moved to the West, see Timothy R. Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3. Mahoney also uses the phrase "distant outposts."

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# DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AND ADAPTATION OF ITALIANS IN THE COAL COUNTIES OF OKLAHOMA

DAVID G. LOCONTO

In the late 1800s and early 1900s coal reigned supreme in what is now southeastern Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup> As was the case in the northeastern United States, Italians and other immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were brought in as a form of inexpensive labor to work the mines. Italians had different customs, a different language, a unique appearance, and a lack of training in mining compared with the American, English, Irish, and Scottish miners that preceded them.<sup>2</sup> These differences were the foundation of an atmosphere in which immigrant groups would settle in communities. The

results were struggles between southern and eastern European immigrants on one side, and American and western and northern European immigrants on the other. Italians as well as other southern or eastern European immigrant groups in Oklahoma suffered through this discrimination. Italians have since dealt with the stigma of discrimination and developed a stable economic industry within southeastern Oklahoma.

This essay is an account of the discrimination experienced by Italians and people of Italian descent in the coal counties of southeastern Oklahoma from the late nineteenth century to the present day. In addition, the methods of response from the Italian community in negotiation with the larger acculturative or assimilative forces will be discussed. In turn, this group has been able to maintain a stable and enduring ethnic identity in the heartland of America.

KEY WORDS: Adaptation, Catholics, discrimination, Italian Americans, mining, Oklahoma.

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PIECING TOGETHER THE STORY OF  
ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS

To study the discriminatory processes and the subsequent responses negotiating these

processes toward and among Italian Americans in southeastern Oklahoma, I employed a variety of research methods. They include in-depth interviews and the analysis of archival sources. In-depth interviews were well suited for this study because they allow for the collection of a rich source of data and for follow-up questions and further probing.<sup>3</sup> For example, the first respondents were identified by asking the priest at a local Catholic church for assistance. This led to interviews with three prominent individuals in the Italian community. As connections were made with these individuals, they allowed their names to be used as a reference in letters sent to 222 persons listed in the area telephone directory whose surnames were Italian and who had street addresses. In the letters, I described the purpose of the research and the types of information to be gathered, and I requested permission to conduct interviews. Some letters were returned because of problems with addresses, some were returned from family members who stated the target person was deceased, but only two wrote saying they were not of Italian descent. Of the 147 letters delivered, 60 respondents were interviewed.

Most interviews occurred in group settings. Interviews combined structured, semi-structured, and unstructured formats, because the interview began with standard historical questions, and then gradually allowed each group (or individual) to discuss various issues related to the social dynamics (past and present) of their community and their being "Italian." A major reason for conducting the interview in this manner was that 40 percent of the respondents were age 65 or over. It was easier for these individuals to reflect on their social world and discuss these issues in a chronological manner starting as far back as they could remember and proceeding forward in time. Initial interviews typically lasted two to three hours, with a number of follow-up interviews conducted over a twelve-month period. Most interviews occurred in people's homes. Two took place in restaurants and one took place in a church.

Sixty individuals (thirty males and thirty females) were interviewed, fifty-eight of whom were of Italian descent. Ages of participants ranged from sixteen to ninety-eight. Twenty-four of the respondents were sixty-five or over, and another twenty-three were between the ages of thirty-five and forty-four. Three individuals were first-generation Italian Americans. Twenty-four were second generation; twenty-three were third generation; and eight were fourth generation. Twenty-four were, in their terms, "full-blood" Italians, seventeen were three-fourths, and fifteen were half Italian. The two individuals who were not of Italian descent proved to be quite valuable. One of the individuals worked for Saint Joseph's Church in Krebs, while the other had been married to an Italian immigrant. Both individuals provided outsider information about the social dynamics of the region and offered suggestions on how to approach various individuals within the community. They also provided historical information about the region.

I examined numerous historical documents to add to the accounts provided by the informants, including a study on immigration sponsored by the Sixty-first Congress of the United States (1911). From the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City I obtained various local newspapers from different time periods.<sup>4</sup> In addition, I read minutes dating from 1904 through 1939 from Local Union 2327 (in Krebs) and the Italian fraternal organization *Societa di Cristoforo Colombo* (in Krebs). Finally, I examined mining reports from 1910 through 1955 and other historical documents found in the Pittsburg County Historical Society in McAlester, Oklahoma. Among the materials studied at that historical society were several collections of newspapers and personal testimonies by miners and residents of the area.

Additionally, I conducted observations over a two-year period from such places as restaurants, festivals, people's homes, and business establishments. Various historical sites I visited included cemeteries, the Miners' Monument, and the fairgrounds. My participation took the form of working at an ethnic festival,

gardening for some of the elderly in the community, cooking meals with families, helping with the care of the elderly, and taking part in many family functions such as birthdays, anniversaries, and informal gatherings. This observation and participation gave me a sense of what aspects of Italian heritage were passed on, and what the people today consider important parts of their history.

#### DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination in the coal-mining areas of Oklahoma occurred in both the business and social sectors. In the 1870s, when people from southern and eastern Europe began entering the mines, there were problems with discrimination in the mining profession. Miners organized the first union, the Knights of Labor, but typically, the Americans, English, Welsh, Scots, and others did not want southern and eastern Europeans to join.<sup>5</sup> Although southern and eastern European immigrants were not allowed in the unions, they still went on strike with other miners. Often these immigrants were singled out as instigators. A strike that occurred in 1894 was seen by some to be an insurrection begun by foreigners, mainly southern and eastern Europeans. One report from 1894 stated that "the majority of the miners who had struck were foreigners, and they either did not understand or did not respect American law and American institutions, and preferred anarchy rather than a reign of law and order."<sup>6</sup> When mining companies removed striking miners' families from their homes, they placed them on trains for the Arkansas border. The governor of Arkansas during the 1894 strike stated he did not want "undesirable characters" in the state. Most of the striking miners then were southern and eastern Europeans.

The strike of 1898-1903 gave some hope to race relations, as common circumstance brought all miners together. However, neighborhoods continued to be segregated, and immigrant women and children rarely met "Americans." A quotation from the United States *Sixty-first Congress on Bituminous Min-*

*ing* states the overall sentiments of the United States and the people of southeastern Oklahoma toward Italians:

The South Italians are slow in becoming Americanized and many in the coal regions who have been in this country from fifteen to twenty years are scarcely able to speak English. They live in colonies, have very little association with natives, and show little interest outside of their own immediate neighborhood. They are suspicious of Americans, do not trust their money to the banks, and trade at American shops as little as possible. They are making little progress toward Americanization. Each year the South Italians are investing more money in homes and real estate, and in becoming property owners, they are naturally led to take more interest in civic affairs. Even after the South Italian, however, has made his permanent home in the Southwest, he seems to make little effort to adopt American ways. He does not encourage his children in attending school but takes them away at an early age, thus preventing the second generation from having the opportunity of becoming assimilated. The children hear only Italian spoken in the colony and in the home, and their only opportunity to learn English is at school. . . . The Poles, Slovaks, and Magyars are almost as backward as South Italians.<sup>7</sup>

These sentiments were common for years to come, and sometimes manifest themselves even today. Italians kept to themselves where numbers allowed, and women and children in particular did not associate with others outside their immigrant community. Children were exposed to Americans normally only at school. This was a source of hostility, as children were ridiculed and called names for being Italian and Catholic. Some reported being called "niggers." In the early years of statehood and before, many Italians did not finish school, or they attended predominantly Italian schools. This may have postponed racially





FIG. 1. Silva and Michela families at a picnic in Alderson, Oklahoma, c. 1914. Notice the gentleman front center with the accordion. This was typical musical entertainment for "small" family get-togethers. Mandolins were also common. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

hostile encounters simply by lack of contact. Hostilities did erupt, however, when Italians interacted with non-Italians. Many respondents talked about how they stood up for themselves, family, and friends against the Americans when being called names such as "dago" or "wop."

Although men were more likely to interact with others outside their colony and therefore experience discrimination, women retaliated as well when confronted with discrimination. For women, this discrimination often occurred in markets owned and/or operated by Italians. Italians had the reputation of being good cooks and for making excellent sausage. These markets were frequented by non-Italians for these delicacies. Several people interviewed in the various coal counties told stories of people coming in and asking for "dago bread." The

stories vary from one place to another but follow the same pattern:

I remember when Ornorina was working at a local market owned by her father, when a woman came in and asked for some "dago bread." Ornorina, who was all of about five feet tall, walked around the counter and decked the woman, saying, "Here's your dago bread!"<sup>8</sup>

Fights also occurred in the mines over racial issues. On January 10, 1914, during a race war at the Kali Inla Company coal mine in Cambria, Italian timberman Mike Satalia got in an altercation with Charles Doyle. Satalia died from a blow to the head with a mine timber, leaving his wife and four children. These fights were typically racially or

ethnically motivated. Nevertheless, Italians were staunch supporters of the new union, the United Mine Workers Association, and were ready and willing to buy into the ideology of the Anglo-Saxon socialist leaders who were prevalent in the first two decades of the twentieth century in Oklahoma.<sup>9</sup> Concern about the socialist leanings of Italians led Americans to distrust them even more.<sup>10</sup> However, this concern may be more of a justification for discriminatory behavior against Italians than a real concern, as socialism was popular in Oklahoma, especially in the 1914 and 1916 elections in the coal counties.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s Italian school-aged children experienced discrimination when they were bused to school in the nearby town. One second-generation Italian American tells the story of waiting for the school bus:

I would be out there in the morning waiting for the bus to take me to school. The bus would pull up, the door would open, and the bus driver would say "Protestant or Catholic?" I would say "Catholic" and the bus driver would shut the door and leave. I would have to wait for a car to come and take me to school just because I was Catholic.<sup>12</sup>

Children would go to school and find themselves being attacked verbally for being Catholic. Several people interviewed talked about being called "cat-lickers." The actual statement was "cat-lickers, cat-lickers, kiss the cat's ass."<sup>13</sup> Many respondents stated that teachers would make up new names for the Italian students because they (the teachers) would not or could not pronounce their names correctly.<sup>14</sup>

Italians also developed a reputation for making "choc beer"<sup>15</sup> and selling it to help make ends meet. Americans would often stop to have some "choc" at the home of an Italian. This helped alleviate some problems associated with prejudice, as "choc" was popular. Often the police would call a home before raiding it, in order to give the occupant time to hide most of the "choc" but leave enough

out for the police to find, destroy, and be able to report that they were successful in their endeavor to squelch the illegal activity. Although this kind of agreement showed a reduction in hostilities toward Italians, things would change when World War II began and Italy joined the Axis powers who were opposed to America and its allies.

Italians had always encountered some opposition for their aloofness and for their lack of trust, not only of American government but government in general. Italians were the slowest in getting their naturalization papers, and even after several decades, many Italian immigrants had not received theirs. Although these immigrants had businesses, owned land, and had children and grandchildren in the US military, many Oklahomans were concerned about them. Theodora Giacomo, at the time an elderly Italian immigrant who emigrated to Oklahoma in 1908, was shocked to find police entering her home and taking weapons and radios.<sup>16</sup> Pete Prichard, who was already famous for his restaurant, "Pete's Place," had his home broken into by police, who removed weapons and radios.<sup>17</sup> Frank and Eda Antonelli's home was under surveillance.<sup>18</sup> One immigrant woman remembers the police coming to her home:

My father used to love playing around with clocks. We had boxes of them. When the war broke out, suddenly the police came to the door [and made] their way in. They of course wanted all weapons and radios. However, they found this box of alarm clocks. They thought my father was building bombs. So they took them.<sup>19</sup>

Italians were also harassed outside their homes. Angelo Bartolucci was an immigrant who was outspoken against military involvement in the war. This did not sit well with Oklahomans. One day, Bartolucci was forced to prove his allegiance to the flag and to America. Although Bartolucci did not belong to any subversive organizations and did not write anti-American literature, he was forced to

crawl up the steps of the courthouse building and kiss the American flag, supposedly to show his allegiance to the United States.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, not all discrimination came from non-Italians. Early Italians initially made regional distinctions between themselves and other Italians. In the 1920s and 1930s Sicilians were still viewed as suspect. One gentleman brought home a friend who was Sicilian, and his mother said, "Don't you ever bring that Siciliano in my house again!" It was for no other reason than the young man was Sicilian.<sup>21</sup>

In the postwar years discrimination seemed to be subsiding, but fears persisted. One Italian family who bought a flower shop retained the name of the shop, an already existing business. One reason was they knew the shop had a good following and reputation, but a second reason was that they were afraid no one in the neighborhood would patronize a flower shop with an Italian name.<sup>22</sup>

Fewer of the third-generation immigrants mentioned experiencing discrimination. Some told stories about people's reactions if they dated non-Italians, stating that things were okay as long as the relationship did not get serious. If it did, the other person's family would step in to stop it.<sup>23</sup> One respondent said that her paternal grandparents could not stand the sight of their son, the respondent's non-Italian father, with her mother, simply because she was Italian.<sup>24</sup> Others stated that while in school in the 1970s and 1980s, they were called "mobsters," "niggers," "dagos," "ravioli," "spaghetti winders," and "helicopters." Some were still harassed for being Catholic. One woman mentioned being told by classmates to "wash the dirt off," referring to her olive-colored skin.<sup>25</sup> In a November 21, 1980, *Shawnee News-Star* article on Oklahoma's Italian heritage, a reporter asked Bill Prichard (son of Pete) if prejudice still existed in the area. Bill Prichard's response was "Does the sun come up in the morning?"

In the 1990s there continued to be some discrimination, more subtle perhaps. One respondent said, "There was an anti-Italian and

anti-Catholic sentiment, and both of those are still pretty strong."<sup>26</sup> Another talked of a discussion he had with a non-Italian:

He said to me, "You know we refer to all of you as dagos." And I said, "Yes, I do. And you know that I refer to you as a bunch of semiliterate hillbillies."<sup>27</sup>

The second-generation Italians, now mostly more than 65 years old, still talk about attitudes of those around them. Some remarks are as follows:

You must never underestimate [prejudice] in terms of business, . . . if you are in a profession. You must always be aware of the fact that this is an extremely strong Baptist area. It is the center of the Masonic life.

The antagonism is still here. We get along pretty well on a daily basis, but if we step on somebody's toes the antagonism comes to the surface. . . . They never forget where you came [from].

My family has been here since 1883, but unless my name is Green, Brown, or Jones, you can't pronounce it.<sup>28</sup>

One woman I spoke to, a non-Italian nurse who worked with elderly Italian Americans, seemed delighted to hear about my research on Italians in southeastern Oklahoma. Then she added, "Well, you know, they have their own dago day there. Of course we are not allowed to call them that, but they can call themselves dago."<sup>29</sup> In addition, mafia stereotypes persist, possibly more so since movies like *The Godfather*, *Goodfellas*, and *Casino* have been successful. Before I began this research, a person who grew up not far from the coal counties said that "the" headquarters of the mafia was in southeastern Oklahoma.

A respondent who wrote for a local newspaper stated that in the spring of 1998 a prospective teacher was refused a teaching position in the area. The respondent was told



privately by an alleged insider that it was because the applicant was Italian, Catholic, and from the East. As the respondent told it,

recently, a man was not hired because he was an easterner, Catholic, an Italian. . . . They said to me, if you do anything to bring this to light in the newspaper, we will do everything we can. We will use all our power to hurt you and your people politically and economically.<sup>30</sup>

Evidently, some strong anti-Italian sentiment still exists. At the end of his interview early in the process, one man gave me a stern warning: "Don't get into certain areas when dealing with non-Italians."<sup>31</sup> I was not certain what to make of this statement, but nevertheless, I conversed mainly with those of Italian descent.

#### NEGOTIATION AND ADAPTATION

Any discussion of discrimination would be one-sided if the reactions and adaptations of the people being discriminated against were not addressed. In Oklahoma, Italians were criticized for adapting to the discrimination directed at them rather than attempting to assimilate into American society.<sup>32</sup> Because transportation was seldom available, miners typically lived close to the mines in which they worked. Italians and Italian miners usually circulated in sufficient numbers to allow them to establish small communities called colonies.<sup>33</sup> These colonies became microcosms of their villages in Italy.

This set into motion several dynamics of adjustment to the discrimination from the larger community. First, by living in colonies they could maintain various customs specific to their home culture. For example, they could continue to speak the language of their home country. Because they rarely came into contact with non-Italians, several immigrant women never learned English. Second, they used nicknames for self-identification, which is a typical practice in rural Italy even to this day.<sup>34</sup> Nicknames were also used as an informal means



FIG. 2. *Maria Bianca Fassino*, c. 1906. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

of social control. Names such as Cacci, Cucci, Shoe-Peg, Pudgy, and Gummy were known mainly by those close to the colonies. This practice represents an aspect of the dynamic of insider-outsider knowledge.<sup>35</sup> The outside group could establish knowledge kept from the more dominant, larger community. In doing



FIG. 3. Giuseppe Frasca and his wife in Kiowa, Oklahoma, c. 1915. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

this, Italians maintained closed communities to which outsiders would have difficulties gaining access. This translated into Italians marrying within their communities or in Italy, setting up separate organizations, having separate festivals, and early on establishing businesses that catered to other Italians.

*Marriage.* In Oklahoma, marital patterns were similar to those in Italy. There were certain traditional preferences for a spouse, which were: (1) someone from one's village in Italy; (2) someone from one's region in Italy; (3) someone Italian; and (4) someone Catholic. Many stories abound of miners traveling to Italy to court a woman. Others tell of correspondence between males and females between Italy and America. Often, prospective brides would travel to America and stay in Oklahoma with family or friends from their village

in Italy in order to be courted by the Italian miner.<sup>36</sup> Because Italian Americans usually married others of Italian descent, isolation continued to manifest itself in the Italian community, and the proliferation of Italian identity in Oklahoma continued.

Once married, the new couple would typically stay with family or friends until enough money could be saved to buy a home. For the Italian immigrant, coming from a time and place of extreme poverty, owning land was imperative. There was a saying that "the land is gold." Italians bought land to avoid any possibility of the absentee landlordism they experienced or heard of in Italy. One respondent stated that he still pays property taxes on land no bigger than his dining table.<sup>37</sup>

*Organizations.* The practices and traditions mentioned above were facilitated through the





FIG. 4. Members of the Order of Odd Fellows, Dante Alighieri Lodge, wearing shawl-collars. Alderson, Oklahoma, 1915. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

many organizations that developed in the coal counties. Different fraternal organizations such as the *Societa di Cristoforo Colombo*, *Stella D'Italia*, *Dante Alighieri*, and many others were organized to help Italians adjust, adapt, and negotiate their way through their new life in America.<sup>38</sup> Analysis of minutes from these organizations suggests that they mostly discussed collecting dues to help Italians in times of need and to help their fellow immigrants be successful in America. Religion, or more aptly, the Catholic church, was an avenue for organization and solidarity as a group. The Catholic church was a tie to the historical influences on the Italian people in the form of baptism, marriage, and last rites. For folk believers, as these immigrants were, the church provided the invaluable service of warding off evil spirits.<sup>39</sup>

*Festas.* In the late 1800s various celebrations took place, such as the Feast of the Visitation and the Celebrations of Saint Anne and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, that were carried over from Italy. These *festas* were huge events—for example, the Our Lady of Mount Carmel festa lasted two days and featured a parade. In this festa an Italian band played, and a circus atmosphere ended the evening with dynamite exploding in the evening sky. This festa continues to this day. Although the other festas

have stopped, including the Celebration of Saint Anne. A new Italian festival takes place every year that attracts more than 20,000 people. The early festas acted as a means of unifying the Italian people, as both southern and northern Italians would join together. Although the current Italian festival attracts few native Oklahoman Italians, it does renew interest in the various businesses in the area that specialize in Italian items.

*Businesses.* Not all those who lived in the mining counties were miners. The miners needed food, clothing, and the other necessities of living. Towns such as Hartshorne, Haileyville, Krebs, and McAlester developed to meet these needs. Italians, especially in Krebs, began to assert themselves in other lines of business.<sup>40</sup> Nick Barone and Barney Tarochione bought a meat market; S. Domenico Giacomo and Vito Barzellone were founders of the Giacomo Wholesale Company. Paul Saffa was a promoter of general merchandise and delivered groceries and feed to the mining towns. Other notable Italians who engaged in the grocery business were Frank Duca, Dee Rich (Ricci), Joe Michael, and Steve Testa. The DeFrangia (Di Frangia) brothers had a machine shop and the Loveras opened up a bottling plant that sold "soda pop."





FIG. 5. Six members of a Bocce Club in Alderson, Oklahoma, c. 1940s. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

In some of the other towns Italians did well outside of mining. In Coalgate, in the first ten years of the twentieth century, the International State Bank had as their directors Italians Louis Bonino, Joe Flor, and John Gentilini. In McAlester, L. Pistocco opened a grocery store in 1897, and the Fassino brothers opened the McAlester Macaroni Factory. In Wilburton there was A. Maggi Grocery; Carignano Grocery, owned by Constantino Carignano; Fioretti Grocery, owned by Joe Fioretti; and the Big \$ Gas House owned by Dominic Giacomo. In several of the towns in the coal counties the Antonellis were opening markets and bakeries. They were one of the few Italian families who came to the coal counties not to mine. The Antonellis continued a tradition of grocery stores and bakeries that dates back centuries in Italy.<sup>41</sup>

As we have seen, in the early years (1874-1925) Italian immigrants and their families were adapting, adjusting, and negotiating their

way into a successful way of life in America. However, their adaptations were seen as suspect by Americans because Italians did not become "American" enough. By keeping to themselves, Italians facilitated more animosity against them from the larger milieu. This divide helped facilitate the animosity that occurred during World War II and afterward.

Over the years some important changes occurred in the Italian community. Economic forces, including more than 90 percent unemployment in the 1930s, pushed many residents, Italian and non-Italian alike, from the area. To survive the economic depression that came in 1921 to the coal counties, everyone had to become more creative to make a living. For Italians, this came in the food industry. Interstate 69 runs through the area, connecting the Northern Plains with Oklahoma and, farther south, Dallas. Along the interstate in this area are four major Italian restaurants, an Italian deli, Italian market, and Italian bakery, which



FIG. 6. Joe Fassino and family, c. 1915. Courtesy of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

provide comfortable and enjoyable rest stops for weary travelers. In addition, most businesses in Krebs use the colors of the Italian flag, and a new apartment complex is named Carovilli after the town from which many Italian immigrants had emigrated. When a third-generation Italian American and business owner was asked why the emphasis on Italian ethnicity for business was so prominent, he responded, "What else is there?" His message was clear; to succeed in an economically depressed area, one has to find the best means toward success. With "Italian" food being the number one ethnic food in the United States, the sale of Italian foodstuffs to travelers and locals has created a sustainable market, with some foodstuffs now being shipped throughout eastern Oklahoma.

The food industry and the Italian festival serve as beacons for people of Italian descent



FIG. 7. Left to right: Angelo Scarpitti, Noah Ricci (family name was Ricci), and Niccolo Finamore, Krebs, Oklahoma, 1998. Photograph by author.

throughout the state of Oklahoma. With most of the other traditions now gone, several respondents were happy knowing that the restaurants and festival were there. Krebs markets itself as "Oklahoma's Lil' Italy." This small token of Italianism has served to continue the communities' ties to their Italian roots. With the success of the restaurants and the festival, more people that are not of Italian descent have gotten involved. This has continued the emphasis from the larger community to push the identity of "Italian" as a means of economic stability.

#### CONCLUSION

Over the last 125 years, Italians and Italian Americans have made a home for themselves in Oklahoma. They have faced pressures from the larger community to acculturate. This is a kind of discrimination that many ethnic groups have endured throughout the Midwest. In a struggle to survive both socially and economically, Italians in Oklahoma lived together in colonies. This provided stability. It also served to facilitate animosity toward them. Their adaptations, while suggesting that Italians were making an effort to make Oklahoma their home, only created greater struggles for them

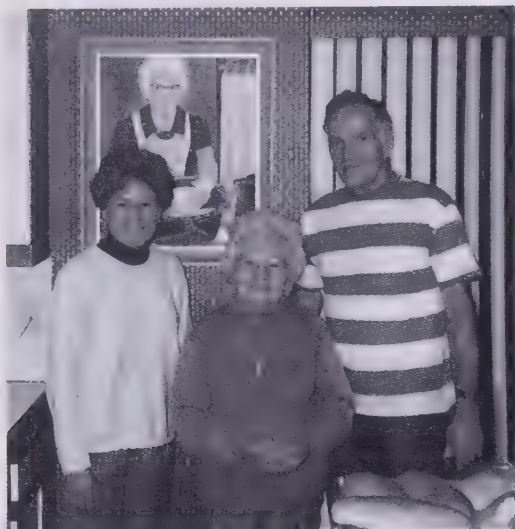


FIG. 8. Vincenza Giacomo Testa and family, 1998. Notice the painting of Vincenza in the background making bread. Photograph by author.

in their relations within the larger community, as it appeared they were resisting pressures to become Americans. Their insistence on dealing with their own, and on maintaining a foreign language, only made them bigger targets.

Yet, as the years passed, discrimination waned, becoming more subtle perhaps, and Italians became more industrious within the minimal economy that exists in southeastern Oklahoma. Gradually the existence of Italian foods and products became more and more appreciated by the larger community. The availability of travel not only allowed for Italians to travel outside of their communities, but allowed others to frequent businesses of Italians. However, these businesses serve another purpose for Italians both in and out of southeastern Oklahoma. Those of Italian descent look to these businesses run by Italians, such as Lovera's Market, Krebs Corner, Pete's Place, Rosenanna's, GiaComo's, the Isle of Capri, and many others, as maintaining some continuity with the past. This is a past of struggle and turmoil, but also excitement and beginnings. Italians in southeastern Oklahoma

have adapted, adjusted, and negotiated against discrimination, and made their way into being Americans . . . Italian Americans.

## NOTES

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2. US Congress, *Sixty-first Congress on Bituminous Coal Mining 33rd Session*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), 1-126.

3. Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "Interviewing: The Art of Science" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln, 361-76 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994); Howard Schwartz and Jerry Jacobs, *Qualitative Sociology: A Method to the Madness* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

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5. Ryan, *Rehabilitation of the Oklahoma Coal Mining Communities*.

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7. US Congress, *Sixty-first Congress on Bituminous Coal Mining*. See David G. LoConto and Cynthia S. LoConto, "Italian Sentiments, Reputations, and Discrimination in Southeastern Oklahoma," *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science* 78 (1998): 11-14.

8. Anonymous, interview by author, Krebs, OK, July 1998. All remarks that are quoted but not documented in this article were asked to be kept confidential.

9. Gordon Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976); Robert W. Miller, *Oklahoma Populism: A History of the People's Party in the Oklahoma Territory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Ryan, *Rehabilitation of the Oklahoma Coal Mining Communities*.

10. Brown, *Italians in Oklahoma*.

11. Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*.

12. Niccolo Finamore, interview by author, Krebs, OK, January 1998.

13. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.



14. Angelo Scarpitti, Noah "Pug" Rich, and Niccolo Finamore, interviews with author, Krebs, OK, January 1998. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June and July 1998. .

15. Choc beer, or "choc," as it is known, was a recipe for beer that the Italians took from the Choctaw Indians. When Italians first came to the coal counties, they settled in what was the Choctaw Nation of Indian Territory, prior to Oklahoma's statehood. With difficulties growing enough grapes or buying enough grapes to make wine, Italians began making choc. This tradition continues to this day.

16. Phyllis Testa Lambert, Bill Testa, and Vincenza Testa, interviews by author, Stillwater, OK, March 1998.

17. Roseanne Prichard, interview by author, Krebs, OK, September 1998.

18. Anthony Yohe, interview by author, Tulsa, OK, August 1998.

19. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

20. Frank Cuzalina, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998. Many others did say they knew about the incident; however, only Frank and his cousin Anthony Yohe volunteered the information.

21. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

22. Jim and Marilyn Pistocco, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

23. Anonymous, interview by author, Hartshorne, OK, July 1998.

24. Marilyn Pistocco, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

25. This last statement came from Emily Prichard, interview by author, Krebs, OK, September 1998.

26. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

27. All remarks quoted here were asked to be kept confidential. The author conducted these interviews in McAlester, OK, June 1998.

28. Ibid.

29. Anonymous, interview by author, Stillwater, OK, January 1998.

30. Anonymous, interview by author, McAlester, OK, June 1998.

31. Ibid.

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34. Andrea Nadali, interview by author, Stillwater, OK, March 1998. For further discussions of the use of nicknames, see Eugene N. Cohen, "Nicknames, Social Boundaries, and Community in an Italian Village," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 14 (1977): 102-13.

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40. Several people interviewed mentioned these professions that Italians were involved with. A document that proved useful was *Pittsburg County, Oklahoma* (Pittsburg County Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., published by Henington Industries, Inc., 1997).

41. Minnie Appling, interview by author, Wilburton, OK, February 1998.



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# GREAT PLAINS NATIVE AMERICAN REPRESENTATIONS ALONG THE LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL

KEVIN S. BLAKE

Memorializing history in the landscape reflects deep-seated cultural needs. This process not only pays homage to the actions, events, or persons deemed significant at a particular point in time, but it also offers a chance for the creators of the historic marker to write their version of history and to use an interpretive format that highlights their own understanding and values. Cultural geographer Kenneth Foote observes in a study of American memorials, "What is accepted as historical truth

**KEY WORDS:** Blackfeet, cultural resources, interpretive sites, Lakota, landscape, Lewis and Clark, Native Americans, Sacagawea.

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is often a narrative shaped and reshaped through time to fit the demands of contemporary society."<sup>1</sup> The significance of selecting particular historical interpretations for commemoration is that the impress of these upon the landscape plays a key role in shaping social memory, as "nations rewrite their history, forgetting much, denying more, and replacing past perspectives with new national images and explanations."<sup>2</sup> Ironically, some of the peoples central to American identity—Native Americans—are often memorialized with markers that "mistreat" them, creating a contested landscape of social memory that stands "in desperate need of revision."<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial commemorations, the significance of American Indians in the social memory of the expedition is strongly debated. Some American Indians express concern over the interpretation of their people and see the bicentennial as an opportunity "to tell their own story of Lewis and Clark, an epic about Indians bailing out whites, showing them where to go, what to eat, whom to avoid along the way, and how to get back home in one piece."<sup>4</sup> Roberta Conner, a member of the Confederated Tribes



of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon and director of its Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, notes that although the Lewis and Clark Expedition is only a "tiny story" within the context of American Indian history, it is one with "tremendous impact" because it "is a story about land, the places we call home."<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this article is to examine the portrayal of American Indians at the interpretive sites along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) in the Great Plains to see to what extent multicultural awareness exists. My central thesis is that many of the representations of Great Plains Native Americans along the Lewis and Clark Trail are stereotyped and give little or no voice to Native peoples. This is problematic not only because of the slanted messages about American Indians and social memory that increased numbers of visitors during the bicentennial are receiving along the trail landscape, but also because these poorly drawn interpretations should not be the model for new interpretive sites developed during the spate of bicentennial commemorations. Similar to the perspective of cultural historian Matthew Dennis, I question the meaning of commonly accepted representations of the past and examine them from multiple viewpoints in the belief that this process is essential for all groups to gain meaningful interpretations of the complete cultural and historical significance of Lewis and Clark.<sup>6</sup>

The underlying cause of the desire for a Native American voice in the Lewis and Clark drama goes beyond historical events and the ethnocentric perspective of the expedition journals, it also springs from the privileged status of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in American social memory. The expedition helped America invent its identity, even while the story grows and changes through each generation.<sup>7</sup> Some of the recent interpretations of Lewis and Clark portray them as proto-ecologists and multicultural diplomats, but all stories have two sides and it strips the expedition of meaning to exclude the American Indian perspective.<sup>8</sup> Examining the misguided inter-

pretations has another benefit, too, since "distorted or oversimplified images of Lewis and Clark are not only inescapable . . . they provide a fascinating index of changes in American society and culture over time."<sup>9</sup> A more inclusive depiction of Great Plains Native Americans along the NHT (the "Trail Tribes") is a critical element in understanding the rich multicultural heritage of places along the trail and the Native role in helping the expedition travel to the Pacific and back.

This study examines the cultural aftermath of the Lewis and Clark Expedition through a previously untapped source—the landscape of the interpretive sites on the trail itself. Established in 1978 under the administration of the National Park Service, the Lewis and Clark NHT involves dozens of partnering federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, American Indian nations, and private landowners. Even the information centers operated by the federal government along the Great Plains portion of the NHT are under multiple jurisdictions, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and National Park Service. To think of the expedition route as the "Lewis and Clark Trail" is somewhat of a misnomer since Lewis and Clark did not typically blaze a new trail. For the most part, the expedition traveled routes previously used by traders or Native Americans, yet the signs of Lewis and Clark pointing the way fix this image in the NHT interpretation (Fig. 1).

## GREAT PLAINS PERSPECTIVES

The Great Plains segment of the NHT is the focus of this study for several reasons. Foremost, this is the "home of the peoples who gave to most of the world the current perception of what an American Indian is."<sup>10</sup> The Plains Indians encountered by Lewis and Clark also were culturally and linguistically distinct (Siouan, Algonquian, Caddoan) from the Rocky Mountain Indians, with a unique set of intertribal relations and interracial dealings with white traders. Furthermore, the Lewis



FIG. 1. Signs like this one on South Dakota Highway 1806 near Fort Pierre National Grassland mark the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. All photographs by the author, June 2003.

and Clark Expedition expressed a different message to Plains Indians than to those in the mountains or coastal regions because much of the Great Plains had recently been claimed by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase.

For the purposes of this study, the Great Plains extends from Kaw Point (the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers in Kansas City) to the Gates of the Rocky Mountains in the Big Belt Mountains of Montana.<sup>11</sup> Even though the mountains are not always in close proximity to the Missouri River upstream of Gates of the Rocky Mountains, here the character of the expedition became focused ever more strongly on crossing the Great Divide, and for the first time the expedition felt it was

in the mountains as opposed to *viewing* mountains. River travelers today also see the Gates as the place at the foot of the mountains where the Great Plains has been left behind.<sup>12</sup>

One of the Native American messages along the trail is that, to at least some Great Plains tribes in 1804, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was just one more party of outsiders interested in trade, continuing an already well-established trend. Tracy King of the Gros Ventre (A'Aninin) Nation says, "If it wasn't Lewis and Clark, it would have been somebody else."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the incursions of whites had already wreaked radical change with the introduction of horses, weapons, and smallpox and other diseases, as well as the subsequently

altered power relations. Yet American Indians easily could have eliminated the expedition at numerous points, and without the aid and accommodation of Plains Indians the expedition would have foundered long before reaching the Rockies.<sup>14</sup> The Native American message also tells of how Lewis and Clark entered an advanced society, not a wilderness, exemplified by the sophisticated agricultural society of the Mandan and Hidatsa nations with large earthlodge towns.<sup>15</sup> To relate their story during the bicentennial commemoration, the tribes have developed tour packages and resource materials for visitors. In Montana, for example, the Chippewa Cree run a store marketing tribal arts and crafts, the Lower Brule Sioux in South Dakota tell their tribe's history through tipi and buffalo hide tanning displays, and the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara offer overnight stays in North Dakota earthlodges. More than a desire to cash in on Lewis and Clark tourists, this is a prime opportunity for the tribes to educate the public about American Indian culture of two hundred years past.<sup>16</sup>

Although I have made repeated visits to portions of the Lewis and Clark Trail, this study relies extensively on detailed fieldwork completed in June 2003 along the entire Great Plains segment of the route. In the Great Plains it is impossible to separate the physical character of land and the season of the year from the way in which its sense of place is interpreted. Open vistas begin to dominate the landscape north and west of Kaw Point, where trees seek "the river valleys, as though to escape a limitless expanse of wind-whipped grass," cottonwoods begin to dominate riparian woodlands, and the expedition first encountered American Indians and bison.<sup>17</sup> In the Dakotas at this time of year the trail strikes through a mostly treeless, rolling green prairie in a big sky country of endless summer thunderheads. In Montana the dappled sunlight on the broad expanses of the shortgrass prairie and river lowlands, and the mountains towering into the cumulus, make for unforgettable images along the trail (Fig. 2).

I visited the interpretive sites accessible by automobile within the Great Plains, and closely examined those that have interpretation of American Indians in the context of Lewis and Clark.<sup>18</sup> Locations visited by a large number of tourists were deemed most central to this study of how American Indians are represented along the NHT. The absence of any single compendium containing every site on the NHT, coupled with the various routes taken by different members of the expedition, resulted, no doubt, in this study's omission of some sites with on-site interpretation of American Indians. Visiting every single interpretive site, however, would not be a feasible nor necessarily meaningful goal given that at any point in time some interpretive sites along the NHT will be closed due to construction, renovation, or decay. Observations were included from nearly all of the major NHT sites, such as national historic landmarks, national historic sites, and places designated as national signature events in 2004-6 by the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. An attempt was also made to include observations from interpretive sites representing each of the Trail Tribes.

Forty-eight locations with on-site interpretation were examined for this study (Table 1). Detailed notes about the textual and pictorial interpretation of American Indians were taken, along with photographs where permitted.<sup>19</sup> The sites were then analyzed based on (1) American Indian nations interpreted, (2) date of interpretive site development, (3) funding agency and/or management organization, (4) location, (5) interpretation format (e.g., marker or statue), and most importantly, (6) nature of the American Indian portrayal. The interplay of landscape and memory at these interpretive sites along the trail is important to analyze in this manner since "the very durability of the landscape and the memorials placed in the landscape makes these modifications effective for symbolizing and sustaining collective values over long periods of time."<sup>20</sup> As much as from wood, plastic, and steel, the interpretive sites are built "from strata of





FIG. 2. Decision Point, Montana, at the confluence of the Marias and Missouri rivers. The Marias enters the Missouri in the upper left of this northeasterly view, just downstream of the large island in the Missouri.

memory."<sup>21</sup> Some markers may last only a couple decades, while statues and monuments made of steel or stone may interpret a version of events to multiple generations.

The findings are categorized into four major thematic representations of American Indians, each having some connection to specific expedition events and places along the trail: *Councils of Power*, *Hostile Encounters*, *Good Neighbors*, and *Sacagawea Reinterpreted*. These themes are presented in a westward sequence because each one is shaped by prior events, yet a purely linear or chronological structure would not account for repetition of the representations along the trail. *Councils of Power* relates to the councils held with the eastern and central Plains Indians. *Hostile Encounters* encompasses the expedition confrontations

with American Indians, primarily with the Teton Sioux (Lakota) in South Dakota and the Blackfeet (Pikuni) in Montana. *Good Neighbors* relates to the winter spent with the Mandan (Neuúdia) and Hidatsa (Nuxbaaga) Nations and the expedition's study of Plains Indians. *Sacagawea Reinterpreted* includes the multiple archetypes attributed to her, such as guide, interpreter, peace symbol, and Madonna of the trail.

Interwoven throughout the four themes of American Indian representations is a cameo role that is typically reserved for the Natives. American Indian interpretations consistently receive less space than is devoted to any other major aspect of the expedition, such as the transportation, naturalist observations, and camp life displays in the Chamberlain Lewis

TABLE 1

## INTERPRETIVE SITES EXAMINED ON THE LEWIS &amp; CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

INTERPRETIVE SITE	LOCATION
Case Park (Lewis and Clark Point)	Kansas City, Missouri
Riverfront Park*	Leavenworth, Kansas
Frontier Army Museum*	Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Fort Leavenworth Historic Wayside Tour	Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Atchison County Historical Museum	Atchison, Kansas
4 <sup>th</sup> of July Creek 1804*	Atchison, Kansas
Western Historic Trails Center	Council Bluffs, Iowa
Lewis & Clark Monument	Council Bluffs, Iowa
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park	Fort Calhoun, Nebraska
Lewis and Clark State Park*	Onawa, Iowa
Blackbird Scenic Overview, US Highway 75	Decatur, Nebraska
Nebraska Historical Marker, US Highway 75 (Omaha Tribe)	Macy, Nebraska
Nebraska Historical Marker, US Highway 75 (Tonwantonga)	Homer, Nebraska
Cottonwood Cove City Park*	Dakota City, Nebraska
Sergeant Floyd Monument	Sioux City, Iowa
Sergeant Floyd River Museum	Sioux City, Iowa
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center	Sioux City, Iowa
"Lewis and Clark: An American Adventure" (Southern Hills Mall)	Sioux City, Iowa
Spirit Mound Historic Prairie*	Vermillion, South Dakota
Lewis & Clark Visitor Center at Calumet Bluff (COE)	Gavins Point Dam, Nebraska
Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge	Running Water, South Dakota
Lewis and Clark Information Center	Chamberlain, South Dakota
Atka Lakota Museum & Cultural Center	Chamberlain, South Dakota
Bad River – Missouri River Confluence (Lilly Park)	Fort Pierre, South Dakota
LaFramboise Island Nature Area	Pierre, South Dakota
Farm Island Recreation Area	Pierre, South Dakota
South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center	Pierre, South Dakota
West Whitlock State Recreation Area	Lake Oahe, South Dakota
Sakakawea Monument	Standing Rock Reservation, South Dakota
Jedediah Smith Monument	Standing Rock Reservation, South Dakota
Double Ditch State Historic Site	Bismarck, North Dakota
Sakakawea Statue State Capitol Grounds	Bismarck, North Dakota
North Dakota Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center	Washburn, North Dakota
Fort Mandan	Washburn, North Dakota
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site (NPS)	Stanton, North Dakota
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site (NPS)	Buford, North Dakota
Yellowstone River – Missouri River Confluence*	Buford, North Dakota
Big Sky National Back Country Byway Wayside Exhibit (BLM)	Terry, Montana
New Beginnings Statue	Miles City, Montana
Pompeys Pillar National Monument (BLM)	Pompeys Pillar, Montana
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Visitor Center (BLM)*	Fort Benton, Montana
Decision Point: Marias River – Missouri River Confluence (BLM)	Loma, Montana
Montana Historical Marker, US Highway 87 (Marias River)*	Loma, Montana
State of Montana Lewis and Clark Memorial	Fort Benton, Montana
Fort Benton Scenic Overlook, US Highway 87*	Fort Benton, Montana
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center (USFS)	Great Falls, Montana
Ryan Island Day Use Area	Great Falls, Montana
Broadwater Portage Overlook*	Great Falls, Montana

Places listed are those with some on-site Lewis & Clark interpretation. Sites are listed in the sequence studied. Asterisks indicate lack of American Indian interpretation. Federal agencies operating a site are designated COE for US Army Corps of Engineers, NPS for National Park Service, BLM for Bureau of Land Management, and USFS for US Forest Service.

and Clark Information Center (opened in 2000 by the South Dakota Department of Tourism and the State Historical Society). The Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs (built by the National Park Service in 1997 and operated by the State Historical Society of Iowa) pays only token attention to Native Americans, noting a few general ethno-historical events, such as decimation by disease. American Indians break out of the cameo role most significantly at the Blackbird Scenic Overview in northeastern Nebraska; Atka Lakota Museum in Chamberlain, South Dakota; North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Washburn; Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in central North Dakota; and the Lewis and Clark NHT Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, but even at these locations some interpretation fits within one of the four dominant themes.

#### COUNCILS OF POWER

The primary objective of the expedition, ascertaining the practicability of a water route across the continent for the purposes of commerce, was bundled with numerous other objectives, including scientific observation and collection of plant, animal, and mineral specimens, observation of weather data, study of Indian cultures, mapping geographic features, promoting American trade, and conducting councils with the Indians.<sup>22</sup> The *Councils of Power* representation of American Indians in trail interpretation dominates from Kansas City to Calumet Bluff at Gavins Point Dam on the Nebraska-South Dakota border.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout this stretch the explorers were on the lookout for Indians with whom to meet. Lewis and Clark eventually were able to hold council with the Otoe (Jiwere) and Missouri (Nutachí), Yankton Sioux (Nakota), Teton Sioux, Arikara (Sahnish), and Mandan-Hidatsa, with an intent to promote peaceful trade along the Missouri, inform the Indian children of the replacement of their late Spanish father with a new great white father, and

awe the Indians with the military might of the expedition.<sup>24</sup> Although several NHT sites mention Indian trade, including at Case Park in Kansas City, Missouri, where a marker recently erected by the Choteau Society notes that the Kansa had traded with the French, and at the 1980s-era Sergeant Floyd Riverboat Museum (operated by the Sioux City, Iowa, Museum and Historical Association) with a mention of the trading presence of Indians on the river, the overall American Indian interpretation in this segment of the trail is heavily slanted toward the first Otoe-Missouria council on August 3, 1804.

Images of American Indian acquiescence dominate the *Councils of Power* representation, such as at the Lewis and Clark Monument in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Nebraska's Fort Atkinson State Historical Park (established in 1963 on the western bank of the river at the site of the first council), and the interpretive centers in Chamberlain and Great Falls (opened in 1998). Displays frequently refer to the American Indian desire for peace and extending the hand of friendship. Replica and authentic peace medals are ubiquitous, implying tribal acceptance of the United States as the sovereign power. The North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, opened in 1997 by the North Dakota Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Foundation in Washburn, informs of the American Indian desire for peaceful trade, which is also a major theme at the Knife River and Fort Union National Historic Sites, but the Washburn center also interprets that Indians were unwilling to part with their war rituals, and the diplomacy of Lewis and Clark "never imagined the Indians as true partners." Lewis and Clark's gift-giving is another standard element in *Councils of Power*, with displays on this at the interpretive centers in Chamberlain, Calumet Bluff, and Sioux City.

In the *Councils of Power* representation, American Indians are rarely portrayed as equals to Lewis and Clark. The Lewis and Clark Monument in Council Bluffs, erected in 1935 by the Colonial Dames of America and rededicated in 1993 to commemorate "the meet-





FIG.3. *Lewis and Clark Monument in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Erected in 1935 by the Colonial Dames of America, this is one of two life-sized relief panels. The other depicts Native Americans presenting the expedition with melons.*

ing between famed explorers Lewis and Clark and area Native Americans,” has two large relief panels depicting American Indians presenting the expedition with melons (a rare instance of interpretation showing gift-giving by the tribes) and shaking hands with the explorers, but there is no further depth to the tribal interpretation (Fig. 3). Not only are the indigenous peoples nameless, the *Councils of Power* representation also renders them landless in a 1990s-era NHT marker at the monument, with a map showing the expedition route in the western portion of the continent passing through lands either designated Oregon Country, Louisiana Purchase, or New Spain, but not Indian lands. The depiction of American Indian land claims as nonexistent or subservient to other powers is repeated in the

interpretative maps at Sioux City’s Southern Hills Mall (produced for display in 2003 by Split Rock Studios, a museum outfitting company based in Arden Hills, Minnesota), the interpretive center in Sioux City (opened in 2003 by the Missouri River Historical Development, Inc., a nonprofit organization funded by the local riverboat casino), and the 1960s-era Fort Leavenworth Frontier Army Museum. These representations are ironic given that Clark’s 1814 map acknowledged an Indian presence while ignoring Spanish and British claims.<sup>25</sup>

The geographic imprint of the Trail Tribes is consistently absent from many interpretive maps along the NHT, and the *Councils of Power* representations are consistent across multiple media and decades. The Council

Bluffs monument seemed to set the dominant representation nearly seven decades ago with noble yet stylized depictions of the Otoe-Missouria. Left unsaid is the great change over the past two hundred years for these peoples. Dispossessed of their Platte River homeland in southeastern Nebraska, the Otoe-Missouria eventually relocated to Oklahoma.<sup>26</sup> Rhonda Dent of the Otoe Nation observes, "We were the first to greet Lewis and Clark, and look what happened to us."<sup>27</sup> Bicentennial commemorations and interpretive sites containing a Native American voice would provide these peoples a chance to "reconnect to their homeland."<sup>28</sup> Literally putting the tribes on the maps reinforces the message that the Native peoples, despite overwhelming odds, are still in place to offer their unique perspective.<sup>29</sup>

#### HOSTILE ENCOUNTERS

The transition from the *Councils of Power* to *Hostile Encounters* representation begins in Sioux City and is complete by central South Dakota. The Teton Sioux encounter is perhaps the signature event in the interpretation of American Indians in the Great Plains portion of the trail. This episode is recounted at every interpretive site from Sioux City to Pierre, South Dakota, and in the Pierre area this story is usually the sole focus of the interpretation, such as at Farm Island Recreation Area, LaFramboise Island Nature Area, and the confluence of the Bad and Missouri rivers. Interpretive sites in North Dakota and Montana also focus on this encounter, reflecting its drama and the fixation of the expedition on the Teton Sioux dominance of Missouri River trade.<sup>30</sup> The significance of the *Hostile Encounters* representation is indicated on the National Park Service standard map panel installed many places along the NHT. It mentions Plains Indians only three times: first council, Teton Sioux encounter, and Blackfeet encounter (the other major event in *Hostile Encounters*).

The *Hostile Encounters* representation is well illustrated by several versions of the Teton

Sioux encounter. At LaFramboise Island Nature Area in Pierre, on the east bank of the Missouri River, the 1990s-era NHT marker reads:

The expedition had its first meeting with the Teton Sioux on September 25, 1804, at the mouth of the Teton River (today's Bad River), just across from here. The captains met on shore with three chiefs: Black Buffalo, Partisan and Buffalo Medicine, then took them out to the keelboat. When Clark returned the Chiefs to shore, several Tetons attempted to detain him. Clark drew his sword, the Tetons strung their bows, and Lewis readied the men for action. Black Buffalo moved to diffuse the situation by ordering his men to back off. Eventually, they allowed Clark to return to the keelboat; two of the chiefs went with him.

This text attributes the initiation of hostilities to the Tetons with an attempted detainment of Clark, although it notes Black Buffalo was a calming influence. The Washburn interpretive center expounds on the hostile nature of the Sioux by stating:

Even gift-giving became a disaster when they gave one chief, named the Partisan, fewer gifts than his rival, Black Buffalo. Highly offended, the Partisan hijacked a pirogue.

The Great Falls interpretive center rationalizes the Sioux action this way:

The open trade advocated by Lewis and Clark would wipe out the Lakota monopoly. No wonder they treated the Expedition with hostility.

Although the Great Falls center at least places the encounter in the context of power relationships, the *Hostile Encounters* interpretations are silent on other possible causes for the tense negotiations, such as preconceived notions on the part of the captains, or how the

Teton Sioux were insulted by the expedition's poor diplomacy in offering mere trinkets as gifts, or how the tribe was offended at the idea of subjugation to yet another new great father.<sup>31</sup> The aggressive theme is oft repeated at other sites: the 1990s-era Calumet Bluff visitor center calls the Teton Sioux "one of the most aggressive of the Sioux bands"; the Chamberlain information center contains text on how the captains reacted with firmness to the Sioux warnings and threats; and the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center (built in 1989 and operated by the State Historical Society) features text about how the expedition was always on its guard after the Tetons tried seizing one of the expedition's canoes as toll. The murals and accompanying text at the Southern Hills Mall in Sioux City also echo the greedy interpretation of the Teton Sioux by stating that they "demanded more than the expedition could afford."

The same event may be interpreted from several different perspectives, however, and while the Teton Sioux encounter is dominated by interpretation with hostile overtones, a nonattributed west-bank marker of indeterminate age in Lilly Park at the Bad River confluence reads, in part:

President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Captains William Clark and Meriwether Lewis to explore the Louisiana Purchase and make peaceful contact with the native nations. Here where the Bad River meets the Missouri, the Corps of Discovery held council, feasting, and celebration with the Teton Sioux. Language barriers led to an armed confrontation, diffused largely through the efforts of Chief Black Buffalo. The expedition continued peacefully to the Pacific Ocean.

Without casting blame on either party or portraying the Tetons as aggressive or greedy, this marker offers a neutral rendition that avoids the *Hostile Encounters* archetype.

The Blackfeet encounter in northern Montana was the most violent of any of the *Hostile*

*Encounters*. All the National Historic Trail interpretations of this event follow approximately the same script, illustrated with this text at the Great Falls center:

Lewis, Drouillard, and the Field brothers rode deep into Blackfeet (Pikuni) country. On July 26 near the Two Medicine River, eight Blackfeet men rode towards them. Lewis presented three among them with a flag, a medal, and a handkerchief. That evening he described America's intentions to trade guns with the Salish (Selís), Shoshone (Aqui-Dika), and Nez Perce (Nimiipu). This news may have alarmed the Blackfeet because these tribes were their traditional enemies. At dawn the warriors attempted to steal the party's guns and horses. In the ensuing fight, Reubin Field mortally stabbed an Indian and Lewis shot another, narrowly escaping being killed himself. The Blackfeet beat a hasty retreat. Lewis quickly burned the warriors' abandoned shields and reclaimed the flag given the previous day. He left a peace medal around the dead warrior's neck and fled the scene.

The Montana Historic Expedition Trail Map produced in the past few years by the Bureau of Land Management (exhibited at Pompeys Pillar National Monument and Decision Point) enhances this representation by showing Lewis shooting the "thieving" Blackfeet. The Blackfeet are also represented as hostile in the interpretation at the Washburn center and the Great Falls Ryan Island Day Use Area (developed in 1976 by Montana Power Company). The most biased portrayal of the hostile, powerful Blackfeet, however, is in a mural at the Southern Hills Mall in Sioux City (Fig. 4).

As is typical with any narrative, verbal or written, multiple versions of the encounter exist in Blackfeet oral tradition. The only instance of this viewpoint presented along the NHT is in the Great Falls interpretive center:



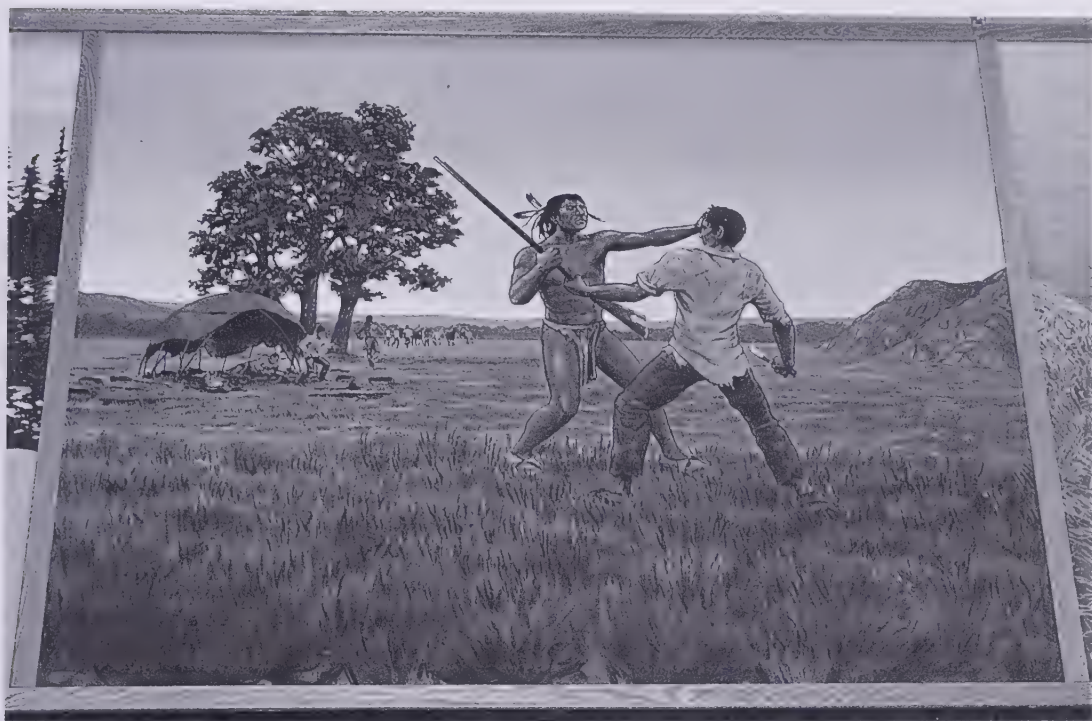


Fig. 4. The Blackfeet encounter is portrayed in this mural at the Southern Hills Mall in Sioux City, Iowa. This is one of thirty-eight murals in the exhibit "Lewis and Clark: An American Adventure," painted by Split Rock Studios and commissioned by Southern Hills Mall.

A Pikuni raid near the Two Medicine River in 1806 ended in tragedy. Wolf Calf, a member of the Pikuni party, recalled the incident years later. He said a war party was roaming the southern bounds of their territory when they met the first white men to ever visit the area (Lewis and his men). The Pikuni greeted the white men in a friendly way, but later the chief directed the young men to steal their guns. In the attempt, a Pikuni named Side Hill Calf was killed with the white men's "big knives."

Yet another Blackfeet version, although absent from on-site interpretations, is far different:

Two Blackfeet boys—12 and 13—were on their way home when the men of the expedition spotted them and invited them to camp. Lewis kept insisting they camp with

them. He said we have a gift for you, and they had hands on guns at all times. In the middle of the night the boys tried to leave. One of Lewis's men woke up and stabbed one boy. Lewis shot the other.<sup>32</sup>

Significantly, this is the version that is taught in a Blackfeet school, and thus it may be assumed to have more resonance with the Blackfeet than Wolf Calf's account. Horse stealing, a common action among Plains Indians and a recognized war honor,<sup>33</sup> is also transformed by some NHT interpretations into a degenerate act. The portrayal of the Crow (Apsaalooka) theft of horses on the return trip, seen in the Chamberlain and Washburn centers, also fits within the *Hostile Encounters* theme.

The unflattering *Hostile Encounters* portrayal of American Indians would be expected

from an outdated source rather than in so many displays created in the past two decades. The pictorial reinforcement to the written text of this theme in the Sioux City Southern Hills Mall murals and the Montana trail map is particularly disturbing and runs strongly counter to achieving even a modicum of multicultural awareness along the trail. *Hostile Encounters* may be so firmly entrenched in popular thought because of its portrayal in Bernard DeVoto's generally highly regarded and widely read abridgment of *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*. It refers to the Teton Sioux as "among the most warlike of Indians, swaggerers and bullies," and it notes that Lewis handled the Blackfeet encounter "with an expertness that no one could have surpassed."<sup>34</sup> The journal entries of the expedition members cement this impression; Clark, for example, used words like "vilenous [sic], hostile, and treacherous" to describe the Teton Sioux, who "ill treated us."<sup>35</sup> Yet cause for hope exists in suggestions for balanced portrayals of American Indians, such as one published by the Montana Governor's Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission. It says that to improve Montana's Lewis and Clark interpretation, interpretive signs should "emphasize the Native American point of view."<sup>36</sup>

### GOOD NEIGHBORS

In the vicinity of Washburn, North Dakota, the dominant representations of American Indians change direction in a manner reminiscent of river travelers turning westward at the dramatic Great Bend of the Missouri, as the *Good Neighbors* theme arises to a primary position among Native American interpretations. The "Good Neighbors" exhibit at the Washburn center discusses at length the mutually beneficial relationship of hospitality, friendship, and military alliance between the expedition and the Mandan. American Indian assistance to the expedition is rarely interpreted in detail elsewhere, with the exception of the Sioux City interpretive center and Knife River Indian Villages National His-

toric Site (designated in 1974, with most interpretation development in the past fifteen years).

The NHT interpretations of the expedition's ethnography are also inherent in the representation of Native Americans as *Good Neighbors*. Jefferson instructed the expedition to study "seventeen areas of Indian life and culture," from "language and law to trade and technology," all with a watchful eye toward business enterprise, national expansion, and the empire of knowledge.<sup>37</sup> The *Good Neighbors* representation is manifest throughout the NHT in the elementary interpretation of American Indians as static, passive culture groups worthy of study, such as with artifacts on display in the Sioux City and Pierre centers and the Sergeant Floyd Riverboat Museum; displays on farming and hunting habits at Calumet Bluff, West Whitlock, and Knife River; signs about Indian words or legends providing place names at the Chamberlain center and Big Sky Wayside Exhibit in Terry, Montana; and interpretation of Indian plant use at Pompeys Pillar. While in aggregate Lewis and Clark assembled a valuable ethnographic record, in practice along the NHT it is generally presented piecemeal and in a way that conflates Native American cultures, with the notable exception of the Great Falls NHT center.

The earthlodge exhibit at the Great Falls NHT center notes the role of Lewis and Clark as ethnographers but also recognizes that their views were prejudiced, often describing "only external features and events, neglecting the spiritual and cultural significance of what they saw." This statement aptly illustrates the limited perspectives offered by a *Good Neighbors* archetype of Plains Indians. The interpretation of the expedition's ethnography is visually oriented toward Native American dwellings, especially tipis and earthlodges. A tipi dominates the Indian display inside the Chamberlain center, and a stylized tipi outside is the signature architectural feature of the center (Fig. 5). Tipi replicas are also on display at the Atka Lakota Museum, Fort



FIG. 5. Lewis and Clark Information Center, Chamberlain, South Dakota. The tipi picnic area overlooks Lake Francis Case on the Missouri River. (The plane is a crop duster.)

Union Trading Post, and Southern Hills Mall. Earthlodges are even more frequent on the trail, with displays about their construction or replicas at Blackbird Scenic Overview, Calumet Bluff, West Whitlock, Double Ditch, Great Falls NHT center, and Knife River (Fig. 6).

Although the Knife River site offers a great deal of ethnographic interpretation, it still lacks a Native American voice that goes beyond the material culture of tools and housing, to religion and governance, for example. This absence is common among a variety of sites, all developed within the past twenty-five years. Amy Mossett, a Mandan-Hidatsa, wants the commemorations to recognize that "Indians have the strongest sense of place of anyone in the world." Of the sophistication of

her society she adds, "Jefferson wanted to make Indians into farmers and traders. But we were already doing all of that. The difference is, we were doing it without slave labor."<sup>38</sup> Quotations of American Indian perspectives about their own identity, civilization, or beliefs are used liberally at the Great Falls NHT center to add a Native voice.

#### SACAGAWEA REINTERPRETED

Changing interpretations of the Lewis and Clark Expedition reflect changes in society, such as the increasing interest in Sacagawea concurrent with the women's movement.<sup>39</sup> Included in the expedition for her ability to interpret with Shoshones, Sacagawea is the most instantly recognizable individual in displays





FIG. 6. Interior of a Hidatsa earthlodge replica at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota. The painted buffalo hide depicts the war exploits of Mandan Chief Four Bears.

along the trail since she is the only woman and usually the only depicted Native American.<sup>40</sup> Her image has transcended her original role in multiple reinterpretations of what she meant to the expedition. Like the *Good Neighbors* representation, the *Sacagawea Reinterpreted* theme is a widespread element in the NHT interpretation, but it is strongest from northern South Dakota to Great Falls.

The easternmost and westernmost Great Plains sites on the NHT with on-site interpretation both feature statues: Kansas City's Case Park (erected circa 2000) and the Broadwater Portage Overlook in Great Falls (erected 1989). Sacagawea is a sculpture staple along the trail, featured in Kansas City, Missouri; Bismarck, North Dakota; and Miles City, Fort Benton, and inside the Great Falls NHT interpretive center in Montana (Fig. 7).<sup>41</sup> Sacagawea faces west on all five statues, which points to the emphasis of the Lewis and Clark trail interpretation on the westward adven-



FIG. 7. Sakakawea statue on the North Dakota State Capitol grounds in Bismarck. Sculpted by Leonard Crunelle and erected in 1910 by the Federated Clubwomen and schoolchildren of North Dakota.

ture rather than the return and to Sacagawea's multiple roles in that westward progress. Her absence from statues in Sioux City, Washburn, and at the Broadwater Portage Overlook symbolically suggests the ambivalence of the American Indian portrayal along the NHT in the Great Plains. Lewis's dog, Seaman, on the other hand, appears on both the Sioux City and Broadwater Portage statues as well as in Kansas City.

So many meanings have been layered upon Sacagawea that her true self could well be unrecognizable in her mythic interpretation. Even her name changes as one moves among the interpretation sites. Sacajawea is often the preferred spelling in Wyoming and Idaho, a reflection of the phonetic Shoshone pronunciation for a name meaning Boat Launcher. Sakakawea is used in northern South Dakota and in North Dakota because of the phonetic Hidatsa pronunciation for a name meaning Bird Woman. Because Sacagawea's name is

usually spelled in this fashion along the trail and in the literature, I use this spelling except for when it is spelled differently at a particular interpretive site. Sacagawea is portrayed as the expedition's "indomitable and unerring" guide in the earliest interpretations of her extant along the NHT, dating back to 1910 at the Bismarck statue (erected by the Federated Clubwomen and schoolchildren of North Dakota) and 1920 at the Sakakawea Monument in South Dakota (erected by the Mobridge Hickory Stick Club). The unerring guide representation is repeated many times along the trail in later interpretive efforts, including on the 1928 Daughters of the American Revolution plaque at Pompeys Pillar, the 1972 marker at the Fort Mandan reconstruction, and on the recent Montana trail map at Decision Point and Pompeys Pillar that indicates, "Sacagawea points the way." At the Washburn and Great Falls centers her role as a guide is reinterpreted to say, "She did not guide the Expedition as romanticized accounts claim, but she did provide crucial help in several instances."

According to several reinterpretations of Sacagawea in the Great Plains, this "crucial help" was either as an interpreter for Lewis and Clark or a harbinger of the peaceful intent of the expedition. Both of these perspectives are quoted from the journals of Lewis and Clark at the Sakakawea statue interpretive marker in Bismarck, and they are repeated in the Sioux City and Great Falls interpretive centers.<sup>42</sup> The Sacagawea interpreter role is also elaborated in a NHT marker at the Jedediah Smith Monument near Mobridge, South Dakota, and Sakakawea as a symbol convincing local tribes that the expedition came in peace is reiterated in the Washburn center. Building upon the Sacagawea archetypes of guide, interpreter, and token of peace, she is also portrayed as a heroic Madonna of the trail, uncomplainingly dealing with the hardships of travel while caring for an infant;<sup>43</sup> every statue and depiction of her along the trail includes her son, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau. Statues and earlier memorials favor the interpretation of Sacagawea as a guide or

Madonna, whereas her reinterpretations as interpreter or harbinger of peace come in later displays along the trail.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES

Mark Spence highlights the challenges of interpreting American Indians within the context of Lewis and Clark, noting that current commemoration efforts are rooted in old ideas that cloud understanding of the expedition and perpetuate a set of cultural burdens that are increasingly problematic. The interpretation of Lewis and Clark "as exemplary models of multiculturalism" is even "less accurate" than that of a century ago when they were hailed "as champions of industrial growth and resource exploitation."<sup>44</sup> According to Spence, the danger is that the Lewis and Clark bicentennial will portray excitement and adventure but not all of the expedition's legacies. He calls for "an honest assessment of the expedition as a long, difficult, imperial venture with tragic consequences for the peoples and homelands that Lewis and Clark described and evaluated."<sup>45</sup> The dependence of Lewis and Clark on resident communities in making their way across the continent is still underemphasized along the trail. How can we recover what has been lost since the Lewis and Clark Expedition if we do not receive a comprehensive view of who they encountered?

Although the *Councils of Power*, *Hostile Encounters*, *Good Neighbors*, and *Sacagawea Reinterpreted* representations dominate the Native American interpretation along the Great Plains portion of the Lewis and Clark Trail, eleven of the forty-eight places with on-site interpretation lack even a brief mention of American Indians. In almost every case of omission, the tribes could have been interpreted as part of the Lewis and Clark journey, since American Indians were rarely completely separate from the expedition. The construction and renovation of interpretive sites for the bicentennial commemoration offered a chance to end the silence of Native American voices and the recycling of old themes.<sup>46</sup>



The persistence of poorly drawn Native American representations along the Lewis and Clark Trail likely emanates from a variety of circumstances, including the influence of DeVoto's seminal work mentioned earlier in *Hostile Encounters*, and the power of the heroic Lewis and Clark myth. A lag time in either the ability or inclination to replace semipermanent markers contributes to the presence of outdated perspectives, as could the lack of a single management directive to include the Native voice. The variability in American Indian cultures and in the versions of Native oral histories also is a contributing factor. Yet it is also clear from some recent biased interpretations that some organizations are at best uninformed by recent scholarship, or at worst unwittingly racist.<sup>47</sup>

Rarely do the NHT interpretations attempt comprehensive summaries of the legacy of Lewis and Clark (especially pertaining to Native Americans), but a comparison of two examples illustrates the potential voice versus silence of indigenous peoples in the expedition drama. At the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center a recent interpretive display called the "Explorers' Legacy" reads, "The Lewis and Clark Expedition made the West real for Americans. . . . The Corps of Discovery brought back a wealth of information about land, plants, animals, and native tribes." This passage perpetuates the cameo role for American Indians and implies they had no sense of place prior to the expedition. Conversely, the Atka Lakota Museum (opened in 1991 by St. Joseph's Indian School) strips the journey of its heroic drama and instead focuses on the changes to the people and place:

The Lakota met Lewis and Clark in 1804. Subsequently, increasing contact with the white world included traders, explorers, missionaries, the US Army, Indian Agents, miners, and settlers, bringing sweeping changes to the Great Plains. Thousands of Indians died from diseases, setting off a struggle for the people to retain what was theirs amid the seemingly endless tide of

the wasícu (white men). Eighty years after the encounter with Lewis and Clark the buffalo were gone, forever changing the Lakota way of life.

Because no one organization has had total control over the NHT interpretation, there are multiple layers of meaning regarding American Indians. Given the varied and constantly changing perspectives on American Indian interpretation, however, the existing decentralized NHT interpretation model may be best.

Historian Simon Shama notes that "not all cultures" embrace the myths produced by the interplay of landscape and memory "with equal ardor."<sup>48</sup> Skewed interpretations apparently resulted in the defacement of several Jedediah Smith plaques and the Sakakawea Monument plaque near Mobridge, South Dakota, on the Standing Rock Reservation. The damage is at two different locations separated by several miles of paved and dirt roads, and it is selective at each site, targeting specific language as opposed to random or senseless destruction. Even the choice of the medium for the vandalism seems purposeful and symbolic, as it consists of red paint sprayed over some text in a neat circle. It is not hard to imagine why someone in this area would disagree with the heroic portrayal of Jedediah Smith, but less immediately evident is why some text at the Sakakawea Monument received the same treatment. An explanation may lie within the Native American perspective that urges teachers to "avoid materials which illustrate Native American heroes as only those who helped Euro-Americans."<sup>49</sup> The Sakakawea Monument interpretive text places her significance entirely within the context of a noble savage helping the expedition: "Sakakawea won her place in history as the indomitable guide of Lewis and Clark on their trip to the Pacific in 1805. . . . By her courage, endurance, and unerring instinct she guided the expedition over seemingly insuperable obstacles. . . . Sakakawea is, beyond question, the most illustrious feminine representative of the Indian race." On the site of the Sakakawea Monument, a bronze





FIG. 8. Blackbird Scenic Overview alongside US Highway 75 on the Omaha Indian Reservation north of Decatur, Nebraska. The site was developed in partnership between the local natural resources district and the Omaha Tribe. This location overlooking the Missouri River is a sacred place, near the burial site of Chief Blackbird of the Omaha. The interpretive shelter in the background symbolizes an Omaha earthlodge. Interpretive displays place the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the context of the Omaha, an atypical but welcome perspective along the National Historic Trail.

relief picturing her and Jean Baptiste Charbonneau is undamaged, as is the nearby Sitting Bull Monument. Likewise, at the Jedediah Smith Monument site the text is untouched that interprets Sacagawea as the trip's only female and a key interpreter with the Shoshone.

Enhancing the contemplative mindset of visitors along the Lewis and Clark Trail could at times be equally important as creating the right tone in American Indian interpretation, however.<sup>50</sup> Spirit Mound, South Dakota, offered a powerful opportunity for personal contemplation about the meaning of the place to Lewis and Clark and Native Americans during my fieldwork, but that was by accident, since the site recently was acquired by the

state, with the old interpretation mostly removed and the new interpretation not yet installed. Furthermore, road construction forced me to approach the summit from an unconventional direction, making my own path across the prairie; therefore, I drew a sense of place through my own touch, smell, sight, hearing, and spirit. Had I visited Spirit Mound even a few weeks later the interpretive signs would likely have been in place and the visit highly structured, all to the possible detriment of a contemplative experience.

Nevertheless, interpretive sites along the NHT can offer an insightful portrayal of Native Americans. Blackbird Scenic Overview, a relatively unknown Lewis and Clark site in

northeastern Nebraska, developed over perhaps the last fifteen years jointly by the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District and the Omaha Tribe, illustrates an exception to the overall pattern and provides a possible model for future interpretations (Fig. 8). The significance of this site accrues from its sacredness to the Omaha due to the proximity of Chief Blackbird's grave, not just because Lewis and Clark visited the grave. Lewis and Clark are portrayed as a small part of the Omaha story in the detailed signs about Omaha history, earthlodges, social structure, symbols, and contributions to American society and the expedition. Another sign asks visitors to "respect this sacred area." The inclusion of American Indian partners is a key in breaking the mold of the typical Native representations. Including the perspectives of the Trail Tribes would likely lead to interpretation of contemporary issues related to the legacies of the expedition, such as "sacred site protection and the return of human remains and burial goods."<sup>51</sup> Too often in America an "anti-historical habit of thought" intrudes on the representations of the valued past, with history "merely museumized, not integrated with the present."<sup>52</sup> Places like Blackbird Scenic Overview and the Great Falls NHT center offer a sharp and refreshing contrast to this tendency.

Analyzing the date, creator, and format of interpretation leads to several conclusions. Surprisingly, the newest interpretive efforts and those by federal agencies do not always offer the most culturally aware interpretations of Native Americans in the context of Lewis and Clark, as evidenced by the *Hostile Encounters* tone of the 2003 mural display at Sioux City's Southern Hills Mall or the *Hostile Encounters* and *Good Neighbors* tropes perpetuated at Decision Point and Knife River. The media used in American Indian interpretation tend to characterize certain themes. Reconstructions, for example, typically focus on material culture, reminiscent of *Good Neighbors*. Signposts and statues are mixed in their messages of *Councils of Power* and *Sacagawea*

*Reinterpreted*, which largely seems a function of whether American Indians were consulted in the interpretation process. Pictorial representations of the Trail Tribes are the most problematic in the portrayals of *Hostile Encounters*.

It could be unrealistic to expect to see the American Indian voice in the textual interpretation of the trail, since this voice is traditionally oral, not written, and the storyteller tone of voice and listener reaction are elemental to sharing ideas and interpreting meaning.<sup>53</sup> But to craft new or revise old representations of Native Americans along the trail, recordings of tribal voices, or at least written quotations, and an end to the recycling of insensitive representations would be an appropriate start. Just as some members of the expedition undoubtedly became more attuned to American Indian cultures during their journey, the Lewis and Clark trail interpretation should further evolve toward including the Native American voice.

## NOTES

1. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 29.

2. Quote from p. 109 of David Lowenthal, "The Place of the Past in the American Landscape," in *Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Honor of John Kirtland Wright*, ed. David Lowenthal and Martyn J. Bowden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 89-117. See also Simon Shama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 15.

3. James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: New Press, 1999), 443-47. Although the label "Native American" is often generically attributed to the indigenous peoples of the Great Plains, many tribes also identify with "American Indian," the typical term at many interpretive sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail. This article uses terminology similar to that used in Suzanne Heck, ed., *Native American Resource Handbook* (Atchison: Kansas Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee Native American Subcommittee, 2002), which interchangeably describes American Indians, Native Americans, and the individual tribes.

4. Timothy Egan, "Two Centuries Later, a Moment for Indians to Retell the Past," *New York Times*, June 15, 2003.

5. Ibid. See also Roberta Conner, "The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial: Putting Tribes Back on the Map," in *Lewis and Clark: Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, ed. Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 265-73, and Christie Appelhanz Eckert, "Focusing on Inclusion: American Indian Perspective," *Kansas!* no. 4 (2003): 21-22, for discussions of the varying American Indian points of view on the bicentennial.

6. Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 2-5. John C. Hudson, "The Big Empty," *Historical Geography* 31 (2003): 61-67, also promotes the value of a multicultural perspective. This study does not primarily focus on telling the Lewis and Clark story from the American Indian point of view since that is already the perspective of James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, [1984] 2002), and this perspective is also best related by Plains Indian storytellers. Instead, this article examines the NHT portrayal of Native Americans who were encountered by Lewis and Clark.

7. The significance of Lewis and Clark to national myth and identity is explained by Bernard DeVoto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952); John Logan Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (New York: Dover, 1991); James P. Hendrix Jr., "A New Vision of America: Lewis and Clark and the Emergence of the American Imagination," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2001): 211-32; and Walter Kirn, "Lewis and Clark: The Journey that Changed America Forever," *Time*, July 8, 2002, 36-41.

8. Mark Spence, "Historical Commentary: The Unnatural History of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 53, no. 2 (2003): 56-63.

9. Quote from p. 160 of John Spencer, "'We Are Not Dealing Entirely with the Past': Americans Remember Lewis and Clark," in Fresonke and Spence, *Lewis and Clark*, 159-83.

10. William Least Heat-Moon, *River-Horse: The Logbook of a Boat across America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 263.

11. Kaw Point is also known as Kawsmouth, a place that takes its name from the Kansas (or Kaw) River, which was named for the people alternately called the Kaw, Kansa, or Kanza. For more on the Kansa, see Heck, *Native American Resource Handbook*, 9-12, and Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 160-64.

12. John B. Wright, "The Dearborn River Confluence: Montana's Northwest Passage," *Historical Geography* 31 (2003): 89-96, writes that Lewis, who

named the Gates of the Rocky Mountains, refers to this place in his journal as towering, remarkable, and dark, with gloomy rock cliffs. See David Lavender, *The Way to the Western Sea: Lewis and Clark across the Continent* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 229-44, for a description of how the dramatic landscape change at the Gates caused Lewis to underline his journal entry for added emphasis, and also for how the expedition focused on crossing the Great Divide after the Gates. Heat-Moon, *River-Horse*, 360, 382, comments on leaving the Great Plains behind and being at the foot of the Rocky Mountains once he reaches the Gates.

13. Angie Wagner, "Indians Want Their Side of Story Told," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, May 4, 2003. I use the tribal names that are commonly seen in the interpretation along the trail, in the Lewis and Clark literature, or by the tribe today, although other tribal names are provided in parentheses.

14. The shifts in power relations are discussed in David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, [1979] 1992), 19-22; Spence, "Historical Commentary," p. 59; and John C. Ewers, "Plains Indian Reactions to the Lewis and Clark Expedition," in *Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. James P. Ronda (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1998), 171-82.

15. The Native American perspective can be sampled in Dan Oko, "Honoring the First Discoverers," in *Living in the Runaway West*, ed. High Country News (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2000), 45-46; Margot Roosevelt, "Tribal Culture Clash," *Time*, July 8, 2002, 66-68; and Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*.

16. Heck, *Native American Resource Handbook*.

17. Paul Russell Cutright, *Lewis and Clark: Pioneering Naturalists* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 62.

18. Three guidebooks that proved valuable in identifying sites with American Indian interpretation were Barbara Fifer and Vicky Soderberg, *Along the Trail with Lewis and Clark*, 2nd ed. (Helena, MT: Farcountry, 2001); Roy E. Appleman, *Lewis and Clark: Historic Places Associated with Their Transcontinental Exploration (1804-06)*, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, vol. 13, ed. Robert G. Ferris (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1975); and Thomas Schmidt, *National Geographic Guide to the Lewis and Clark Trail* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2002). Dozens of tourism pamphlets published by federal, state, and local agencies were also consulted. This study only examines interpretive sites extant in June 2003; thus, new sites under construction at that time, such as the Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Center, are excluded.



19. Interpretation center videos were excluded because often a choice of videos is offered or a fixed schedule is in place, thus it was impractical to consider them as part of the permanent exhibits. Furthermore, obtaining a transcript of every video for content analysis was unfeasible. Living interpretation is also outside the context of this study for similar reasons.

20. Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 33.

21. Shama, *Landscape and Memory*, 7.

22. Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 18; Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 35.

23. The US Army Corps of Engineer Visitor Center at Gavins Point Dam is on the remnants of Calumet Bluff (named for the French word for a ceremonial peace pipe), most of which was excavated for the dam and power plant.

24. David J. Wishart, *An Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1-4; Bernard DeVoto, ed., *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), xliii; Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 17-23.

25. Clark's 1814 map is discussed in James P. Ronda, *Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 54-55, and in John Allen, "The Maps of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," in *Mapping the West: America's Westward Movement 1524-1890*, ed. Paul E. Cohen (New York: Rizzoli, 2002), 74-96. Maps in the interpretive centers at Great Falls and Calumet Bluff do depict Plains Indian lands, but the standard NHT map on display at many sites does not.

26. Wishart, *An Unspeakable Sadness*, 216-26; Wright, *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*, 199-200.

27. Egan, "Two Centuries Later."

28. *Ibid.*

29. Conner, "The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial," 268-69.

30. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 7.

31. Roosevelt, "Tribal Culture Clash."

32. This version is attributed to Jesse DesRosier, a fourteen-year-old in the Piegan Institute in Browning, Montana, in Wagner, "Indians Want." Thomas P. Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 180-85, also provides alternative versions of the Blackfeet encounter.

33. Ewers, "Plains Indians Reactions," 172.

34. DeVoto, *Journals of Lewis and Clark*, I, lii. Ronda, *Voyages of Discovery*, xiv, observes that although DeVoto's use of some terms is "regrettable," DeVoto was also the first Lewis and Clark historian to call for a fuller treatment of Indian perspectives on the journey.

35. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987, 1993), 3:121; 8:329-30.

36. Montana Governor's Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission and the Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative, *Lewis and Clark in Montana: Interpretive Sign Strategy* (Helena, MT: Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission and Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative, 2000).

37. Quoted from Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 3-4. See also Donald Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, [1962] 1978), 1:165-66.

38. Egan, "Two Centuries Later."

39. Christopher Sullivan, "Retracing History: On the 200th Anniversary of the Cross-Country Journey of Lewis and Clark, a Look Back Enables a Critical Examination of the United States," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, January 12, 2003. The nuances and mysteries of the name and life of Sacagawea are addressed in Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image*, 211-12; Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 256-59; and Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 86-113.

40. Two members of the expedition, Pierre Cruzatte and Francois Labiche, were half Omaha and George Drouillard, another member of the corps, was half Shawnee, yet travelers on the expedition other than Lewis, Clark, Sacagawea and child, York, and Lewis's dog, Seaman, are rarely depicted in statues.

41. Andrew Gulliford notes that there are "more statues erected to her honor than any other American woman" on p. 245 of "On the Tourist Trail with Lewis & Clark: Issues of Interpretation and Preservation" in Fresonke and Spence, *Lewis and Clark*, 239-64.

42. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1988, 4:11, 299; 5:111, 122, 268.

43. Joanna Brooks, "Sacajawea, Meet Cogewea: A Red Progressive Revision of Frontier Romance" in Fresonke and Spence, *Lewis and Clark*, 184-97.

44. Spence, "Historical Commentary," 58.

45. *Ibid.*, 62.

46. The basic themes are present in DeVoto, *Journals of Lewis and Clark*, in his focus on councils announcing the new great father (p. xliii), hostile encounters with Indians (p. I), and American Indians as good neighbors (p. Iv).

47. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987).

48. Shama, *Landscape and Memory*, 15.

49. Heck, *Native American Resource Handbook*, 27.

50. Joseph Sax, *Mountains without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980).

51. Gulliford, "On the Tourist Trail," 251.

52. Lowenthal, "Place of the Past," 110.

53. Eckert, "Focusing on Inclusion," 21; Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 8.

## REVIEW ESSAY

*Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness.* By Thomas P. Slaughter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. xviii + 231 pp. Maps, illustrations, index. \$24.00 cloth, \$14.00 paper.

*Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition.* By W. Raymond Wood. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xvii + 234 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

*Lewis and Clark: Across the Divide.* By Carolyn Gilman. Foreword by James P. Rhonda. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003. 424 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, notes, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

*The Literature of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: A Bibliography and Essays.* Essays by Stephen Dow Beckham. Bibliography by Doug Erickson, Jeremy Skinner, and Paul Merchant. Portland, OR: Lewis and Clark College, 2003. 314 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, color plates, bibliography, index. \$75.00

### TELLING STORIES ABOUT LEWIS AND CLARK: DOES HISTORY STILL MATTER?

It is obvious that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are famous men. The story of their expedition and the people who traveled with them, including Clark's enslaved African American York and the Indian woman called Sacajawea, is an iconic narrative of Americana. The fifty-four page annotated list of books, pamphlets, and articles published between 1906 and 2001 in *The Literature of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* attests to a fascination that took hold during the centennial of their great trek and threatens to swamp us all during its bicentennial.

Less obvious is what the fuss is all about. In terms of a ratio of attention to historical significance, the Lewis and Clark expedition is perhaps the most overstudied event in the history of North America. It was hardly a turning point: if Lewis and Clark had never ventured up the Missouri River in 1804 or reached the Pacific Ocean in 1805, the history of this continent would not have been markedly different. Witness the obscurity of their accomplished predecessors. Alexander Mackenzie,

who crossed the breadth of North America a decade earlier, is at best a continental footnote. Scotsman James Mackay and Welshman John Thomas Evans mapped the Missouri Valley during their 1795-1797 expedition, as W. Raymond Wood details in his new book. But Evans died soon after the journey; and while Mackay was rewarded for his services and became a prominent citizen of St. Louis, he is not well-known today. So common were Europeans that Mandans, Sioux, and other Indians expressed no surprise at the appearance of Lewis and Clark. (They were, however, interested in York.) Indeed, from a global perspective the two men and their comrades were only one example of a horde of European and American travelers at the turn of the nineteenth century who journeyed into the interiors of the world's continents and published accounts of their adventures.

Traditionally, scholars justify their attention to Lewis and Clark by locating the expedition within a national narrative. The explorers matter because they constituted an

official party operating as agents of the United States of America and, more specifically, President Thomas Jefferson. Unlike Mackenzie and Mackay, Lewis and Clark worked for a government that not only claimed to own the territory (as a result of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803) but that conquered and transformed it by the end of the nineteenth century. They made the United States a visible presence along the Missouri and Columbia rivers. Carrying full-dress uniforms and flags, the expedition was a continental parade announcing the emergence of a new power. Lewis and Clark were significant not as white men but as a certain kind of white men.

Critics affirm the importance of the national framework by operating within it. Looking at Lewis and Clark from the perspectives of the Indians they encountered as well as postmodern conceptions of colonialism, race, gender, and narrative, scholars see the expedition as an opportunity to examine and reflect on American society in microcosm at a time when its cultural parameters were still in flux. The issue is not so much what the explorers achieved as what they represented, as their behavior as white American males who practiced slavery, exploited women, and heralded the destruction of the Indians and ecosystems of the Missouri and Columbia river valleys. Devotees of the expedition have deflected these criticisms by absorbing them. Carolyn Gilman's *Lewis and Clark: Across the Divide*, a gorgeous companion volume to the Missouri Historical Society's *Lewis and Clark: The National Bicentennial Exhibition*, has chapters on women, landscapes, flora, and fauna. The theme of cultural encounter and misunderstanding runs throughout the text, and Gilman concludes her well-written overview with a selection of contemporary Native American voices.

The appeal of the Lewis and Clark expedition as a window into the character of the United States is minor, however, compared to its appeal as a universal story of human (or rather, male) achievement. In his contribution to *Lewis and Clark: Across the Divide*, the

always insightful James P. Ronda identifies four reasons for its continuing popularity. "First, it is a story—or, rather, a series of stories told by many actors and narrators." Second, it "is a story about a journey." Third, the expedition was "a human community, as diverse as any in America today." Fourth, it "is a remarkably accessible story" (47, 48). It is significant that Ronda's list is more literary than historical. Most people probably couldn't care less about the expedition's historical importance; what matters is that it is about men with whom they identify, men who left an abundance of information from which anyone can construct a plausible story about whatever suits one's needs.

Certainly that is what Thomas P. Slaughter seems to be up to in his remarkable new book, *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness*. At first glance, Slaughter's contribution seems to be a collection of essays designed to throw a wet blanket on bicentennial self-congratulation. No doubt aficionados will receive his book as they would an uninvited guest who insists on pointing out things revelers do not want to hear. Slaughter expresses his admiration for the explorers' achievements as well as those of their many historians so frequently that one deduces he is aware that many readers will likely dismiss or denounce the book as contrarian nonsense. More troubling is the fact that his tone is often at war with his intentions. Notwithstanding his subtle understanding of history as constructed and susceptible to many interpretations, Slaughter is given to authoritative declarations (as in the first six pages of chapter 2) that do not invite disagreement.

Slaughter's close readings of the journals are often brilliant and always interesting and imaginative. But he has a tendency to get carried away and to conclude as definitive what he has initially proposed. In talking about why many scholars reject the oral tradition that Sacajawea lived until the 1880s, he asks, "What is it that leads historians to adopt the rhetoric of certainty at precisely those points where plausibility should be our highest ambition?"



What are the stakes, what is at risk, why has the authoritative voice become the last, unacknowledged and perhaps unconscious, refuge of the evidentially challenged?" (88). These are excellent questions. In answering them, however, Slaughter sometimes hoists himself by his own petard. After suggesting that members of the expedition treated York badly, he states that "It was the time of his life" (121). Because "Indians treated York as a great man and sometimes as *the* great man of the expedition," it "does not take a flight of imagination from these sources to surmise that York's expedition was personally transforming and empowering" (121). Taken together with evidence that York defied Clark upon his return to St. Louis, this is a reasonable conclusion. But it is still an act of imagination, *informed* imagination, to be sure, but imagination nonetheless.

Slaughter's account of why Lewis stopped making entries in his journal in mid-August 1806 is another case in point. The captain and his biographers attributed the sudden change to the discomfort of a wound he suffered when a member of the party accidentally shot him in his buttocks. "As writing in my present situation is extremely painful to me, I shall desist until I recover and leave to my friend Capt. C. the continuation of our journal," explained Lewis, who returned to St. Louis on September 23 (45). Slaughter will have none of this, arguing that Lewis stopped because of a chance meeting with two Illinois hunters who somehow reminded him of his failure as an explorer. This is an interesting idea. But Slaughter is not trying to be suggestive. He is *certain*. "No, the coincidence of meeting up with the white men and Lewis's cessation of writing was cause and effect" (45).

This repeated insistence on one interpretation in a book advocating a multiplicity of interpretations is unfortunate because Slaughter is a smart historian. He is right that too often readers take the journals at face value, assuming they are accurate records of what happened and that Lewis and Clark were reliable transcribers. The journals were revised

numerous times before the expedition returned to St. Louis, let alone before they were published. There is nothing sinister about this process. Lewis and Clark were simply human beings whose writings must be read with caution.

Much more interesting is Slaughter's effort to reorient Lewis and Clark historiography away from American historians' obsession with positivism, chronology, and omniscience. To some extent, Slaughter is championing a form of storytelling in which time is inconsequential, in which stories develop less chronologically than psychologically, in which oral traditions matter as much as written sources, in which emotional truth is as persuasive as factual truth. It is personal storytelling concerned more with a universal nature of human beings than with the usual preoccupation of historians with the peculiarities of time and place.

Slaughter is largely unconcerned with the significance of Lewis and Clark in terms of what European Americans for the past two centuries have commonly called history. *Where* the expedition appears in narratives of the rise of the United States or the conquest of North America, while interesting and important, is not critical. Instead, Slaughter wants us to consider human beings and the stories we tell to explain ourselves to others and, no less crucially, to ourselves. He is interested in understanding the nature not just of explorers but of ambition, tolerance, and the ways in which people define success and failure. His quarry is nothing less than human nature. The journey of Lewis and Clark, like York's, was an intensely personal one that changed them permanently. No one who reads these essays could doubt that the mercurial Lewis's mysterious death was anything but the suicide of a depressed man who thought he had failed to accomplish anything worthwhile.

I profoundly admire what I understand Slaughter to be attempting. This book, like his previous work, *The Natures of John and William Bartram* (1996), makes for exciting reading. *Exploring Lewis and Clark* bristles with

more ideas than those found in a dozen average monographs. Would that more of us had the temerity and the talent to attempt something different, to write innovative history that engages readers in unexpected ways.

Still, I worry about the lack of history in Slaughter's book. By history, I do not mean a linear narrative constructed out of written sources. I do mean a sense of the distinctiveness of different historical times and places. Slaughter made me think about a question that has bedeviled me since graduate school, which is just how different we are from people in the eighteenth century. If the past is indeed a foreign country, how much do we misunderstand it and its residents, not solely because of incomplete and ambiguous sources or our agendas, but because we simply cannot understand it, because it is too different, because its implicit rules defeat our eager efforts to decipher them? It is tempting to see the people we study as sharing much in common with us. No doubt they did. But they also differ from us in important ways that we need to respect as much as we respect the differences between the Americans and the Sioux.

Lewis and Clark were sons of eighteenth-century British America who grew up in an era of global republican revolution. As their journals demonstrate, they were men for whom self-restraint was the ultimate virtue, men not given to self-revelation. Far from pouring forth their souls either in person or with pen, they worked to repress emotion and to record in a relatively dispassionate fashion. The world, which acquired meaning through the slow, deliberate accumulation of data into recognizable patterns, was a wondrous place that human beings could eventually understand and control. "Mastery," a word with pejorative connotations in our society, connoted the triumph of human power after centuries of subjugation to the forces of monarchy, superstition, and barbarism. To trade and talk rather than fight and deceive was a marvelous development, a sign of the progress of humanity. Much as Thomas Jefferson was committed to the ultimate removal or absorption of Indians,

he wanted to treat them well, to avoid brutality and savagery, or at least to assure himself that he had *tried* to do so. Indeed, it is critical to any understanding of this period to accept that Jefferson and Lewis were trying to be civilized, even if that meant exercising naked power politely.

It should not surprise us that Lewis and Clark's journals appealed to few people in nineteenth-century North America. The explorers operated in the tradition of an eighteenth-century European enlightened sensibility embodied in the life and mind of Jefferson. They were part of a culture that assumed the possibility of progress, that attempted to bring order to perceived chaos through the accumulation and classification of data, that was driven by a genuine fascination with the rich diversity of the earth's peoples. Wildly ethnocentric, they nonetheless conceived of the world's population as a great family that could be understood and improved into a mirror image of idealized European models of human behavior. Thus the impulse to travel, record, and disseminate what they saw and heard and touched, and above all to exchange information, ideas, and goods. Reciprocity in commerce and conversation was the key to realizing their vision of harmony and stability.

But Atlantic civilization was changing in dramatic ways that made the scientific recording of data and impressions anachronistic. More and more people were embracing a darker view of the world, a world neither benign nor controllable, a world of sublime beauty and horror whose workings were on some level beyond human ken. A great many chose to put their faith in a Christian God, to whom it somehow must all make sense. Others, including the contemporary novelist Charles Brockden Brown, confronted the failure of the Enlightenment to bring order to the whole. Landscapes might be rearranged and reforms proposed. But human nature was human nature, and it would play out its passions and its discontents and its fears in tumbrils clattering into the Place de la Concorde and the screams of dying Creeks on the killing fields of Horse-

shoe Bend. It is easy enough when we focus narrowly on Lewis and Clark to forget what rough, unrefined, and savage places London and New York were in the early nineteenth century. Lewis and Clark's world was not Monticello writ large. Indeed, one might argue in the manner of Thomas Slaughter that the insistence on civilization was a reflection of the fragility with which Jefferson and company regarded it. Violence was easy; civility was work.

Lewis and Clark had the distinction of working on the cusp of a turn from rationality into irrationality, from enlightened self-control and discovery to an acceptance of Romantic notions of racial predestination and emotion, from secular salvation through the reorganization of visible or external landscapes through rational means to the reorganization of internal landscapes through conversion. It was a movement from Jefferson to Jackson, from *Candide* to Heathcliff, from a world in which the cause of America was the cause of all mankind to a world in which the cause of America was, well, the cause of America, and white male Americans at that. The sheer curiosity and patience of Lewis and Clark would soon enough be in short supply in the United States. By the 1860s, Americans would kill each other with abandon, leaving their melancholy president to wonder whether the Civil War was a divine plan of expiation for their collective sins.

We see this shift vividly in our obsession with the fate of the unhappy Lewis. Hard as it is to believe that a man of such talent and achievement may have killed himself, it is even harder to accept that we will never know exactly what demons tormented him. Our struggles with Lewis's death are, like his death

itself, a tribute to the failure of the larger enlightened enterprise of which his expedition was a shining example. Historians, too, can gather data, organize it into narratives, and classify behavior. But at the end of the day, some things refuse to bend to our will and remain defiantly unknowable.

All of this is by way of suggesting that we not throw out *all* of what we learned about history. I fear that Lewis and Clark are as impossible to decipher internally as York or Sacagawea, in part for historical reasons. Had they lived a generation or two later, they would have inundated us with personal reflections. Time and place do matter; cultural context can be decisive. Yes, we can read their texts ethnographically, looking for clues or shards of clues as to what they thought, and make educated guesses. But it is next to impossible to get at what they were feeling without making that extra jump into the realm of the imagination, into the realm of fiction. It was not for nothing that novels became to the nineteenth century what histories had been in the eighteenth, for novels allowed authors and readers to contemplate psychological life, to consider feelings and motivations, something ultimately (and sadly) off limits for historians.

*Exploring Lewis and Clark* is well worth reading because it challenges old assumptions and offers new ideas. I will assign it to students in an effort to shake them out of their acceptance of tired clichés, to get them to think anew. In the end, alas, I found the book more provocative than persuasive, for what Slaughter most successfully stimulated me into thinking about was the limits of his approach.

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# Plains Song Review

*exploring sense of place in the Great Plains*



Photo/art by J. Lynn Batten, winner of the 2004 Christine Pappas Award for Best Work, is from the cover of volume 6 (2004).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Coronado Expedition from the Distance of 460 Years.* Edited by Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. xiii + 338 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, references, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$39.95 paper.

The remarkable descriptions of places and people produced by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition constitute the verbal baseline for measuring historical change in southwestern America. Those descriptions are most useful, however, when linked to modern locations. Many of the writers in this essential volume have set themselves to that task.

William Hartmann and Betty Graham Lee survey poorly studied ruins in southeastern Arizona in search of a landmark, "Chichilticale"—a ruin in Coronado's day, and John H. Madsen describes his search for artifacts in private and public collections that might help delimit Coronado's route from Sonora to Zuni. In New Mexico, Anne Ramenovsky combines archaeology with other sources of knowledge to try to identify the site of Yuque Yunque, on the Rio Grande. Farther east, Harry Meyer suggests Coronado's probable route between Pecos Pueblo, in New Mexico, and Blanco Canyon, in west Texas—two points where archaeologists have found his traces. When we lack such traces, Richard Flint argues, we must know where Coronado was in time in order to know where he was in space. And Flint tells us, by cleverly reconciling conflicting documentary evidence. Donald Blakeslee and Jay Blaine describe the Blanco Canyon site, discovered in 1995, and its implications for solv-

ing the riddle of Coronado's route through Texas. Frank Gagné explains the rarity of the copper dart points (fired by cross bows) that associate Coronado with Blanco Canyon, and Dee Brecheisen describes other metal artifacts of Coronado's era which might yet be found.

Essays in this rich volume go beyond efforts to reconstruct Coronado's route. In a revisionist piece, William Hartmann and Richard Flint argue that a widespread belief in riches to the north antedated the reports of Cabeza de Vaca and Fray Marcos de Niza. Shirley Flint calculates the pesos invested in Coronado's expedition, discovering that the sum was astonishingly high by standards of the day. Using Coronado's often-published muster as an example, Richard Flint explains why previously published documents need to be retranscribed, retranslated, and recontextualized. Maureen Ahern reinterprets Pedro de Castañeda's well-known chronicle as a verbal map of a strange new world, which often left him at a loss for words. Félix Barboza-Retana reminds us that Coronado's nephew, Juan Vázquez de Coronado, was the conquistador of Costa Rica. John Kessell and John Miller Morris offer provocative meditations. If Coronado was the first non-Indian to enter the Southern Plains, Miller wonders who will be the last to leave his farm or ranch when the water runs out.

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*Interpreters with Lewis and Clark: The Story of Sacagawea and Toussaint Charbonneau.* By W. Dale Nelson. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2003. x + 174 pp. Map, photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

The release of the Sacagawea dollar coin in 2000 met with decidedly mixed reviews. Critics complained that it was too much in size like the quarter and could not be accommodated in retail sales drawers. Despite the intrinsic beauty—the golden coin features Sacagawea and her infant son on the face and a soaring bald eagle on the reverse—the dollar has earned little popularity since its introduction.

Interestingly, for all the criticism of the design, there was little negative comment about the woman chosen to grace the coin. Sacagawea's story is familiar to most Americans: the teen-aged Shoshone woman, pregnant at the journey's beginning and carrying a toddler son by its end, assisted Lewis and Clark as a guide and interpreter. With her French Canadian husband, she accompanied the Corps of Discovery from the Missouri to the Pacific and back again.

Yet, as Dale Nelson argues in this slim volume, Sacagawea's shadow obscures other figures. Certainly, Toussaint Charbonneau's legacy has been subsumed by his wife's legendary status. And what of their child, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau? Where is his story? To answer these questions, Nelson unfolds a family history that follows the threesome from the end of the expedition until Jean Baptiste's death in 1866. Along the way, the author attempts to highlight the senior Charbonneau's leadership role in the American settlement of the West and the younger Charbonneau's participation in that process.

Through a generational history, this book depicts a time of rapid and profound change. Sacagawea's life links her husband's career as an explorer, interpreter, and trapper in the early period of Western expansion with her son's life as a protégé of William Clark, a guide

for the Mormon Battalion, and, finally, a gold miner in the mother lode. GPQ readers will be especially interested in the descriptions of changing times in the Missouri River country during the 1820s and 1830s. The spread of smallpox and the devastation of the fur bearing animal population led to the destruction of tribal communities like the Mandan and paved the way for permanent American settlement of the region.

Nelson's intended revitalization of Toussaint and Jean Baptiste Charbonneau as significant figures in their own right in the history of the American West is moderately successful. But Sacagawea is always lingering in the background, a mute but powerful reminder of the world that she and her family, unintentionally, helped bring to a close.

LISA E. EMMERICH

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*One Hundred Years of Old Man Sage: An Arapaho Life.* By Jeffrey D. Anderson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. x + 140 pp. Map, photographs, notes, references, index. \$35.00.

Although biographies have long been a staple in Plains Indian ethnology, this profile of an Arapaho man of renown offers something new, different, and important. Because of their unique position in the unfolding events of frontier expansion, well described in this volume, the Arapahos never received the degree of study afforded other Plains tribes, and this book is redress. Moreover, Anderson's method of reconstructing Sage's life story is particularly inventive.

Sherman Sage (ca. 1843-1944) took part in many of the key events of Plains history. He attended the first and second Fort Laramie treaty talks, witnessed the birth of gold rush Denver, and served as his tribe's envoy to Wovoka, prophet of the Ghost Dance move-



ment. He lost three children and a wife to the ravages of reservation life. Under multiple names, he persisted through it all, as warrior, family man, Indian scout, reservation policeman, and minor headman. Sage's story is thus a personal view of the latter days of the buffalo economy and the changes his society faced with the coming of the whites. Much like the Arapaho in total, Sage adjusted but never gave up his Native identity.

The author avoids a plodding timeline, pursuing instead chapter-length themes like marriage, migration, war, and work. Most interesting is the way Anderson triangulates on Sage. He draws quotes from obscure field notes and publications of Sister Inez Hilger and A. F. C. Greene, finds Sage in the notes and monographs of Alfred Kroeber and James Mooney, and fills in some more from his own interviews with Sage's descendants. Many interesting Arapaho customs are recorded, some common across the Plains, others peculiar to the tribe. One surprise is how much Arapaho raiding and other travel was done on foot (Sage ran from Wyoming to Oklahoma to court his first wife).

Anderson labors to keep a low profile; and though he weighs interpretations when matters are unclear, more basic explanation is sometimes warranted. For instance, young Sage's father warned him that announcing his generosity when sharing his buffalo kill would be like killing the beneficiary's relative. This profound equation epitomizing hunter-gatherer morality could be lost on unguided readers. Nevertheless, this volume would be an outstanding choice as a supplement in Plains Indian college classes, or for anyone wanting an engaging synopsis of Arapaho contact history and cultural values.

DANIEL J. GELO

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University of Texas at San Antonio

*Creating Christian Indians: Native Clergy in the Presbyterian Church.* By Bonnie Sue Lewis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xix + 281 pp. Maps, photographs, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

By now it's safe to say that we have turned a corner in studies of Indian missions because recent publications have sustained a new perspective on Native Christianity. Previous interpretive ideas—ones shared by this reviewer—assumed a dearth of Indian documentary sources, regarded white values as incompatible with Native ones, judged evangelical efforts to be failures when Indians remained Indians, and dismissed converts as having abandoned the cultural patterns essential to their ethnic identity. But the author of this volume joins a handful of others who point out that Native clergy did not obliterate tribal self-consciousness but rather worked creatively to instill and maintain a new blend of beliefs and institutions in dynamic cultural forms.

*Creating Christian Indians* focuses on almost sixty ordained Nez Perce and Dakota Presbyterian ministers who labored mostly during the decades between 1865 and 1935. Within this framework the author produces copious evidence to support the view that pastors drawn from these two tribes "translated into their own cultures and languages what was meaningful from what some claimed was a 'white man's gospel' and provided spiritual and material leadership for their people. In doing so they created a more authentic gospel, one not tied to the cultural trappings of nineteenth-century evangelical Protestantism." And they succeeded in rooting vibrant new patterns in Native lives, addressing Native needs, upholding Native values, and expressing all of it with Native voices. Studies like this one show that "Christian Indian" was not an oxymoron but rather that those who "embraced the new ways . . . in becoming Christian . . . did not have to sacrifice being Indian." This multidimensional perspective helps us recognize that conversion to Christianity, for many Natives at least,

"was an open-ended social process actively involving choices and change."

In addition to its helpful thesis, this book's strength lies in diligent spadework in primary sources. Space limitations preclude listing all archives mined, but principal archives include the McBeth-Crawford Collection at the Idaho State Historical Society, the Clifford M. Drury Papers at the Eastern Washington State Historical Society, and the Minnesota Historical Society holdings related to Thomas S. Williamson, Stephen R. Riggs, and Grace Lee Nute. These sources retain much correspondence by pastors in their Native languages, and they provide valuable insight into the struggles and tensions these ministers experienced. Other basic data point to further research: an index of the sixteen Nez Perce ministers—plus one Makah and one Spokane—listed by name, church assignments, and the years served at each place, plus another index of the forty Dakotas with the same information. The university press at Norman is to be thanked for keeping down the price for 190 pages of text, forty-six of notes, nineteen of bibliography, and twenty-three photographs. This book is a valuable contribution to the field and a bargain to boot.

HENRY WARNER BOWDEN  
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Rutgers University

*Showman: The Life and Music of Perry George Lowery.* By Clifford Edward Watkins. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003. xix + 165 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper.

In recent years a number of books have recognized the contributions of African American musicians to the popular musical landscape and returned to the historical narrative figures of seminal importance. Such a figure is trumpeter Perry George Lowery (1869-1942), nicknamed the "Angel Gabriel's Right Hand Man" by his compatriot, W. C. Handy.

*Showman* traces Lowery's life and career in great detail, from drummer of his family's Star of the West brass band to nationally recognized band leader and impresario. Lowery, raised on a farm in Eureka, Kansas, was regarded as one of the finest black musical protégés in the country. By 1897 he was the leader of his own Famous Concert band, which toured with the Forepaugh and Sells Brothers Circus as a sideshow attraction. Although he later ran a music school in Cleveland, wrote educational articles, and started bands throughout the country, Lowery was best known for his excellent circus bands, and he attracted crowds until his death in 1942. Moreover, P. G. Lowery's Progressive Musical Enterprise, started in 1900 to develop and produce acts for sideshows, created the branch of black show business known as "circus minstrels and vaudeville." Lowery also arguably contributed to the integration of circus companies; his was the first black band to play under a big top, in 1920.

Clifford Edward Watkins does an admirable job of chronicling Lowery's multiple professional activities—his motto was "Good things cometh to He Who Waiteth So Long as He Hustleth while He Waiteth"—and manages, for most of the book, to create an engrossing story of a life on the road and the triumph of the entrepreneurial spirit. *Showman* is so richly detailed, however, that names, dates, and supporting information at some points overwhelm the narrative. This is particularly so in the book's second half.

*Showman* is also a portrait of a forgotten part of America's musical past. While local brass or wind bands were common, people in the rural Midwest and Plains territories heard more diverse musical literature only from traveling companies. Circus side shows, in particular, brought the minstrel show, early black musicals, vaudeville acts, and selections of concert music and light opera to those who would ordinarily have been denied exposure to music by African American artists. Ultimately, this is *Showman's* greatest strength: acknowledging the vibrant black culture that

flourished on the Great Plains, outside the major urban areas, in the early part of this century.

ROBERTA FREUND SCHWARTZ  
Department of Music and Dance  
University of Kansas

*Profiting from the Plains: The Great Northern Railway and Corporate Development of the American West.* By Claire Strom. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. x + 228 pp. Photographs, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.

A former colleague of mine once remarked of James J. Hill, with some emphasis, that he was a "great man!" This statement seems subject to some qualifications, which my colleague did not provide, but which Claire Strom offers in *Profiting from the Plains*. Hill, the "empire builder," was a great man with many shortcomings, not the least of which was his conception of himself as a great man.

Strom focuses on the Great Northern's and Hill's interest in supporting agriculture on the northern Great Plains. Hill believed that the GN, built without land grants, had to depend on income from haulage in order to prosper. Though lumber and ore figured largely in the GN's profits, Hill's personal interests in diversified agriculture influenced corporate plans to encourage the development of a dense agrarian population on the Northern Plains. In his attempts to foster successful farming, Hill sponsored at various times demonstration farms, distribution of high quality livestock, support for agricultural colleges' research and demonstration programs, and federal irrigation projects. His interest in these programs varied with the political winds; he sought alliances with federal or state agencies or colleges if they agreed with his ideas, and, when they didn't, he established necessary agencies within the Great Northern. But as national politics turned toward Progressive ideas about expert scientific leadership in agriculture and

federal control of western land use, Hill, agricultural amateur, lost political power and, ultimately, influence within the Great Northern corporation.

Strom has drawn on GN records, a variety of federal and state records, and Hill's papers to develop her argument that Hill failed to manipulate settlement and agricultural development to suit his own ideas about agriculture as well as the GN's business requirements. She succeeds in arguing that Hill's greatness as an entrepreneur both supported and conflicted with his attempt to cultivate a personal reputation as a visionary "gentleman farmer." Since Strom focuses almost exclusively on Hill and his son Louis, however, she leaves the reader wondering about how business decisions concerning agricultural practices were made by GN executives.

Readers will enjoy the book more if they already know something about Hill's personal life and the arguments raging around the politics and practices of agriculture in the Progressive Era. Strom might have devoted space in the footnotes to describing some of the terms she uses such as "scrip" (in exchange for land) and varieties of corn. In spite of these minor problems, the book makes important contributions to our understanding of settlement on the Northern Plains and the significance of railroads in western agricultural development.

BARBARA HANDY-MARCHELLO  
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University of North Dakota

*The Montana Frontier: One Woman's West.* By Joyce Litz. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. x + 251 pp. Photographs, map. \$23.95.

*The Montana Frontier: One Woman's West* traces the life of Joyce Litz's grandmother, Lillian Hazen, from her days as a New York newspaper columnist to her years on a Montana ranch. Using her grandmother's journals and her published and unpublished writings,



Litz describes a woman who grew up believing that a husband and children would ensure happiness and success. Yet, as Litz demonstrates, Hazen's life was anything but happy. Despite years of bankruptcy, drought, and a cheerless marriage, Hazen found ways to cope with her circumstances. Although Litz rarely delves into Hazen's emotional state, she believes Hazen's writing itself allowed her to survive.

With the exception of her newspaper columns, Hazen's compositions appear to reflect her inner thoughts, and it is through these personal musings that a clearer picture of Hazen emerges. She not only explored issues such as suffrage and birth control, but also drew attention to the demands ranching made of women. These articles provided Hazen with a creative outlet as well as income.

Accompanying Litz's narrative are brief overviews of Hazen's surroundings. While these forays into Montana history set the stage, they often contain facts that overwhelm and detract from Hazen's experiences. Though Litz uses Hazen to bring a feminine perspective to the post-World War One economic recession that struck the northern Great Plains, Hazen's voice becomes lost amid a myriad of historical facts. By the book's end, the biography of Lillian Hazen has become more a history of Montana. Furthermore, not all of Litz's information is accurate. One example includes the naming of Lewistown, Montana, which was not named after Captain Meriwether Lewis, but after Major William H. Lewis who established Fort Lewis in 1876.

An additional drawback of this volume is Litz's lack of documentation. In establishing the scene, Litz draws on a vast array of secondary sources which, along with primary documents, are not footnoted. This includes quotes from Hazen, the origins of which Litz fails to establish. The reader is therefore left wondering where Litz finds her facts as well as Hazen's works.

*The Montana Frontier* will appeal to fans of narrative history. In a style resembling Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* books, it illuminates a woman's life on the Great

Plains. Like Wilder, Litz is an excellent storyteller who fills a niche historians often neglect.

ALLISON BADGER  
Missoula, Montana

*The Real Rosebud: The Triumph of a Lakota Woman.* By Marjorie Weinberg. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. xvii + 86 pp. Photographs, notes, references, index. \$19.95.

Weinberg's narrative shows how quickly life changed for Lakota people during the course of a century. Yellow Robe lived as a traditional Brule. Though his son, Chauncey, grew up in that world, Chauncey's adult life in Rapid City was very different from his youth. Rosebud, Chauncey's daughter, left the land of her ancestors in 1927 to spend most of her life in New York City. Yet each valued being Lakota.

Yellow Robe, born around 1826, fought the Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. In 1883, at the Rosebud Agency, General Richard Pratt persuaded him to send two sons to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to learn what they could to help Indian people. Kills in the Woods took the name Chauncey at Carlisle.

Chauncey was successful at Carlisle. In 1893 he became an advocate of off-reservation schools for Indians and worked in Montana and Pennsylvania schools as a disciplinarian before taking a job as industrial arts instructor at the Rapid City Indian School in 1905. There he met and married Lillian Springer, a non-Indian nurse at the school.

Their daughter Rosebud, named for the Sioux reservation where she was enrolled, was born in 1907 and grew up in Rapid City where she attended public schools. In 1925 she became one of only two Indian students at the University of South Dakota, where she was known for her beauty and her cultural performances. After two years she left for New York City to try show business. There she performed

dances and told stories in hotels and theaters. After her mother's death, Rosebud persuaded her father to portray a chief in the film *The Silent Enemy*. Chauncey died April 6, 1930, the third anniversary of Lillian's death, and a month before the film opened.

In 1947 Marjorie Weinburg met Rosebud Yellow Robe at the Jones Beach Indian Village on Long Island. There Rosebud worked for twenty years, teaching youth about American Indians through archery, crafts, and stories. The women remained devoted friends until Rosebud's death. With this book, Weinberg fulfills a commitment to write the story of the remarkable Yellow Robe family.

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*The Life and Political Times of Tommy Douglas.* By Walter Stewart. Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2003. 334 pp. Photographs, index. \$29.95.

Walter Stewart's life of Tommy Douglas cannot be described as a fresh contribution to our understanding of Canada's most notable socialist, the man who served successively as premier of Saskatchewan (1944-61) and national leader of the New Democratic Party (1961-71). It relies heavily on previous biographies written by Doris Shackleton and Thomas H. and Ian McLeod, as well as Douglas's autobiographical interviews published in 1982. Stewart justifies his reworking of familiar material on the basis that "medicare [i.e., comprehensive, universal, compulsory, and government-administered health insurance] is in crisis," and Canadians "might want to know something more about the man without whom . . . medicare would not exist in Canada today." Soaring costs and long waiting lists have sparked a national debate about the sustainability of socialized medicine, and the ghost of Tommy Douglas, who pioneered medicare in Saskatchewan in 1961, haunts the debate.

Stewart is right to think that we need a thoughtful reappraisal of this iconic figure. Unfortunately, this book does not fill the bill.

Stewart retells in breezy prose the main events in Douglas's life: the Scottish working-class roots; his training as a Baptist preacher during which he embraced the social gospel over fundamentalist theology; the call to Calvary Baptist Church in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, in the 1930s Depression; election to the House of Commons in 1935; five consecutive terms as the most progressive premier in the country; and a spirited, though failed, effort to project prairie socialism onto the national scene. The author knows that Douglas was a more complex person than he is generally assumed to have been. He mentions the socialist leader's pugnacity (he was 1922 Manitoba lightweight boxing champion at the cost of "a broken nose, a couple of teeth out, a strained right hand, and a sprained thumb") and the entrepreneurial instincts that led him, while serving as premier, to invest in a mink ranch and a drive-in movie theatre. Stewart devotes six pages to Douglas's 1932 M.A. thesis, a treatise that endorsed eugenic sterilization of the mentally defective, and agonizes over a letter Douglas wrote in April 1945 expressing anti-Japanese Canadian prejudices. Although Stewart is willing to acknowledge that his hero had flaws as well as great qualities of intellect and force of character, he fails to knit together the various elements of Douglas's makeup to present a coherent portrait. At the end of the book, the reader still does not know the inner man. Stewart quotes a close political ally of Douglas who said of him: "He was not a man you could get to know, really. There was always this private part of himself that never got revealed." Friends can leave it at that; from a biographer we expect something more.

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University of Regina

*Brian Dickson: A Judge's Journey.* By Robert J. Sharpe and Kent Roach. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. xiv + 576 pp. Photographs, notes, index. \$58.00.

This important book about the life and contributions of Brian Dickson (1916-1998), perhaps Canada's greatest judge, is valuable not only because it traces that life but because it analyzes one of the most important periods of Canada's growth to full nationhood. That makes this not just a lawyer's book, nor simply a biography, but a book of important modern Canadian political history.

And it is a book about a quintessential Canadian. Brian Dickson's constant search for "halfway houses," for compromises, for what the authors call a "principled, middle-ground position" is, and I would argue remains, the classic Canadian way.

Sharpe and Roach ably point out Dickson's natural focus as a justice of the Supreme Court, on which he served from 1973 to 1990, was to search for the middle ground, always ready to set aside his own personal views to arrive at a position that was best for the nation—predicated on respect for others and the embrace of diversity in a land as vast and complex as Canada. As a man of the Prairies—the Great Plains—he understood only too well the alienation felt by Westerners towards central and eastern Canada. But in the end he considered there to be something more important—the acceptance of the essential nature of the rights associated with freedom of individual conscience, a faith in human worth and dignity, and a commitment to a free and democratic system. He rose above his fellow Westerners' alienation and strove, and asked them to strive, for something more. He asked them to look at things from the perspective of the disadvantaged—to walk in that other person's shoes.

This put him in conflict with many of his fellow Westerners—not so much those in the western provinces' increasingly cosmopolitan and diverse cities, but those in the rural West for whom change, especially involving social values, was particularly hard to take. As Sharpe and Roach effectively point out, he anguished

over the impact his decisions had on social conservatives, but thought that, like him, they should not be able to have their views prevail over others who did not share them, no matter how strongly those views were held. This live-and-let-live approach was formed by his life experience as a child growing up on the Prairies, in the armed forces during wartime, and as a lawyer and community leader. In fact, to Dickson, tolerance was insufficient—"differences had to be accepted, not merely tolerated." In a diverse country "every individual had the right to be fully accepted."

As a judge, Brian Dickson was an incrementalist, not a radical. Indeed, Sharpe and Roach effectively trace his growth as a judge from his earliest days on the bench onwards, showing that part of Dickson's greatness was born in him and part was acquired through careful observation and analysis and by dint of hard work.

So this good and useful book takes the reader on a tour of what is unique about Canada through the life of one of its greatest citizens. It does so in a readable and comprehensive manner, highlighting Dickson's many fine and significant contributions to a wide range of typically Canadian challenges. Women, Native peoples, federal-provincial-territorial relations, language rights, prisoners, workers—equality rights in general—all were touched in a positive, progressive, and lasting way by Dickson. More than anything, the book shows how a great Plainsman, Chief Justice Brian Dickson, had such a major impact on Canada.

CHRIS AXWORTHY  
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University of Saskatchewan

*More Ghost Towns of Texas.* By T. Lindsay Baker. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xi + 210 pp. Photographs, maps, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

According to T. Lindsay Baker, a ghost town is "a town for which the reason for being no longer exists." The great expanse of Texas



abounds with such places, and Baker claims to have identified more than a thousand of these sites and to have visited approximately three hundred. He described eighty-six abandoned places in *Ghost Towns of Texas* (1986), and now, with the publication of *More Ghost Towns of Texas*, he's written about ninety-four more, always with an eye to explaining how each one's "reason for being" faded away.

The new volume is a direct outgrowth of the older one. Baker's criteria for including a town in the book—that it have visible, tangible remains for a visitor to see, that it be accessible by public roadway, and that its location help to maintain an even distribution of sites statewide—have not changed. Neither has his recipe for informing his readers about individual sites. The towns are organized alphabetically, with each entry including a map, a short description of the place's present circumstances, several paragraphs outlining the town's history (founding, heyday, eventual demise), at least one black-and-white photograph (often more) of the site made by the author, and detailed directions for finding the place. A number of entries include historical photographs as well, and, where appropriate, Baker's directions warn readers about such hazards as bad roads, poison ivy, or snakes.

*More Ghost Towns of Texas* is more field guide than history, more for those interested in exploring abandoned places firsthand than for readers who would like to fit those places, and their abandonment, into a larger understanding of the Texas past. Baker has no thesis to advance here, no new observations on how circumstances of time and place can combine to force communities out of existence.

Nonetheless, it's an affecting book, especially as its separate small histories accumulate. Reading through the various town entries—from Boquillas in the Big Bend to Electric City in the Panhandle, from Old D'Hanis in the rocky hills west of San Antonio to Washington-on-the-Brazos in leafy east Texas—one can't help but sense the power of people's dreams as they establish a new place, a bit of their anxiety when things start going bad, and some portion of their despair as their

community slowly ceases to exist. So, despite T. Lindsay Baker's "just the facts, ma'am" approach, *More Ghost Towns of Texas* is worth spending some time with, especially if you can do so in Bomarton, or Desdemona, or Runningwater, or Santo Tomás, or Sutherland Springs, or. . . .

DAVID WHARTON

Center for the Study of Southern Culture  
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*The Future of the Southern Plains*. Edited by Sherry L. Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xii + 275 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

*The Future of the Southern Plains* is a collection of essays that evolved from a symposium at Southern Methodist University in 2001. The text's primary concern is how oil and water depletion in the Southern Plains affects the economy, autonomy, and aesthetics of the region.

Elliott West describes the historical exploitation of the region as a source of natural materials, including flint, bison, corn, human labor, oil, and cotton. As different resources are developed or depleted, the region's residents must adapt to preserve some quality of life and local pride. John Miller Morris discusses the past, present, and future of the region's family farm. He distinguishes the corporate farm as often a necessary progression as farm properties are managed across family generations, since larger, more diverse farm operations can be more insulated from economic and weather fluctuations than smaller single-family plots. Connie Woodhouse presents a paleoclimatic record of droughts that demonstrates the repetitive cycles of low and high precipitation. Droughts more severe than the 1950s event have occurred in the last few hundred years. John Opie compares and contrasts the leaders of two of the more influential groundwater conservation districts. One emphasized improving irrigation efficiency to delay depletion, while the other promoted the

zero-depletion concept to match withdrawals to recharge. Both approaches beg the question of the most beneficial use of the region's water.

Diana Davids Olien chronicles the changing roles of major and independent oil producers in the region. New technologies and volatile prices contribute to positive and negative uncertainties. Jeff Roche expounds on the regional meaning of conservative politics, and Yolanda Romero traces the settlement, adaptation, and community of Hispanics in the Llano Estacado. Finally, Dan Flores calls for preservation of the Plains grasslands and canyons of the Caprock escarpment. The Palo Duro Canyon missed its chance to become a national park, but present and future attitudes could lead to new public lands programs.

At a time when falling rural populations are seen by some as an indication of the general decline of the region, these essays struggle with the complexities of its people and resources. The authors point to positive indicators and alternatives that can encourage preservation of the Southern Plains' heritage and stability.

KEN RAINWATER  
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Texas Tech University

*A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America.* Edited by Charles L. Crow. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. xvi + 606 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, notes, references, index. \$124.95.

What difference would it make if literary regionalism were taken seriously? We would have an ambitious, readable collection of essays, written by well-known scholars, that would critique as well as defend regional literary movements, re-examine the social implications of local-color and Depression-era regionalism, trace the shifting borders of regionalism's connections with nationalism, study regional issues not only in narratives of

village and countryside but also in Gidget novels and L.A. detective stories, and use current theories to recontextualize past work and predict the future. Here is that collection.

Part 1 contains eleven thought-provoking arguments that re-examine assumptions about regional literature and provide historical and contemporary context. The first two essays set the tone. Michael Kowalewski represents "the prodigal variety of contemporary regionalism" by surveying genres, approaches, controversies, movements—and hundreds of individual titles. Stephanie Foote examines the cultural work performed by regional writing and the ways it "illuminat[es] the often contradictory meanings of the local." Subsequent chapters attend to such topics as feminist regionalism, the city as region, regionalism and ecology, American Indians and place, trans-American and transnational regionalisms, and "the mutual construction of region and race."

Although part 1 is the groundbreaking section, part 2, "Mapping Regions," is the heart of the book. From New England to Hawaii, American literary regions are represented in fifteen chapters that serve well as "companions": they suggest titles and place them in context, introduce important issues, and provide strong mentorship for new readers of each regional literature. Reinforcing the volume's emphasis on the multiplicity of regional visions, these essays vary widely in scope. Lawrence Berkove's "The Sagebrush School Revived" focuses on a few writers in Virginia City, Nevada, during the heyday of the Comstock. In contrast, Diane Quantic's contribution surveys the history and vast expanse of "The Great Plains," touching on hundreds of titles while spotlighting such touchstones as Rölvaag and Wright Morris. Expanding upon one of the volume's key assumptions—that "the writer is not only shaped by, but shapes, the land about which he or she writes" (Fine)—several authors examine "counter-narratives" to the dominant myths of some regions. Sara E. Gardner discusses literary critiques of the "Plantation School" popularized by Thomas Nelson Page, and Susan Kollin fea-

tures writers who have worked to “recast” the A. B. Guthrie “Big Sky tradition” of Montana. Part 2 provides opportunities to delve into one region’s works or wander broadly across the American literary landscape, noticing differences and interconnections among regions.

In part 3, five commentaries on individual authors provide a final layer to the volume’s complex and open-ended discussion of regional literature. Bret Harte, Willa Cather, Mark Twain, Mary Austin, and Wallace Stegner—all “regionalist masters”—do not fit within any narrow definition of region; Cather and Twain, for example, attend closely to several regions, and Stegner writes “from a worldview. . . at once Western, American, and continental” (Cracroft). Nevertheless, as contributor Robert Thacker says of Cather, such writers create “stories [that] . . . cannot be understood apart from their places.” A dynamic understanding of these places and of how they are culturally (and literarily) constituted emerges from this important book.

KATHLEEN A. BOARDMAN  
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University of Nevada, Reno

*Who Owns Native Culture?* By Michael F. Brown. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003. xii + 315 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

In this important work, Michael Brown discusses competing claims to culture through a series of interesting case studies. He begins by outlining the major arguments going on inside indigenous cultures today and how efforts to assert sovereignty have brought many new issues into the political arena. Throughout the work, Brown maintains that a balance must be found between protecting Native culture from outsiders and communicating the benefits of that culture to the mainstream.

Central to his argument is the basic premise that culture is never static and must not be forced into an unnatural stasis by harsh pres-

ervation laws. Such laws would not only damage the dynamics of cultural development, but deprive the public domain of valuable information. While he is sympathetic to complaints by indigenous peoples that colonists have unfairly benefited from the use of indigenous culture, some kind of negotiated sharing is still preferable over what is called a “Total Heritage Protection” program that would completely cordon off all things indigenous.

This work should appeal not only to those interested in repatriation and sovereignty issues, but to scholars of the Great Plains generally. Several of Brown’s most useful case studies revolve around competing claims to landmarks such as Devil’s Tower and the Medicine Wheel in Wyoming. Brown also makes clear that the current contention over cultural sovereignty is creating similar challenges in Australia and Latin America. Throughout his discussion, he skillfully explains the legal implications of copyright and patent law and challenges the reader with the manifold implications for all sides.

*Who Owns Native Culture?* offers no easy answer to the issue of cultural ownership. Brown’s intent is to demonstrate instead the complicated nature of such claims. In the long run, he hopes that civil society (educational and religious institutions, professional organizations, and other such bodies) will negotiate settlements on the usage of sites, symbols, art, and knowledge without the choking bonds of legal absolutes. Only this way, he argues, can both Native and non-Native cultures thrive.

In spite of the complexity of the subject matter, Brown manages to present his material in an engaging and reasonably simple style. His use of anecdotes, photographs, and other illustrations adds to the work’s value. This is a must-read for anyone interested in cultural sovereignty issues and an excellent resource on several significant landmarks of the Great Plains.

APRIL R. SUMMITT  
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*Black Masculinity and the Frontier Myth in American Literature.* By Michael K. Johnson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. 293 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

Over the past decade or so, masculinity has become a subject of continuing critical and theoretical fascination in the academy, and there is now a burgeoning subfield of work on the subject of black masculinity alone. This growing body of scholarship on black masculinity has developed in part in recent years because critics have increasingly understood the status of race in masculine formation and the importance of looking beyond white men as a normative category. Michael K. Johnson offers a revealing and admirable study of black masculinity in relation to a topic that has ordinarily been presumed to be incompatible with black male identity formation: the American frontier. His study, a timely one that should prevent us from ever making this assumption again, makes a valuable and unique contribution to contemporary critical and theoretical dialogues on black masculinity.

Johnson draws on a rich legacy of works in literature by Oscar Micheaux, Owen Wister, Nat Love, John A. Williams, and William Gardner Smith. An added strength of his study is its illustration of the origins of this frontier theme in African American literature in such early works as *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealing with John Marrant, a Black* (1785). Johnson develops his highly intertextual study through engaged and sometimes comparative readings of mostly novels from chapter to chapter. His purpose is to demonstrate ways in which African Americans have revised and expanded the myth of the frontier since its emergence in the nineteenth century. He shows us how some black writers have highlighted the frontier as a spatial backdrop precisely for the purpose of illustrating ways in which it allows black men to transcend the barriers conventionally imposed by the dominant discourses of race in the United States.

The work of scholars such as Richard Slotkin and Annette Kolodny, along with clas-

sic histories of the frontier offered by Frederick Jackson Turner and Theodore Roosevelt, helps Johnson establish the critical foundations for his argument. Furthermore, feminist perspectives and novels by black women writers such as Pearl Cleage, Toni Morrison, and Pauline Hopkins are also methodologically important in shaping Johnson's study of black masculinity. His highly effective strategy of juxtaposing works that are not ordinarily thought of in relation to one another is most fascinatingly manifested in the third chapter where he explores Love, Hopkins, and Wister. Indeed, this study, as the introduction states, "helps us to expand our understanding of the way African American writers have participated in the creation of American literature in general and of the literature of the frontier in particular—as both agents and innovators." That Johnson highlights the extranational contours of the American frontier myth makes his study relevant to an increasingly transnational American studies and, to an extent, also underscores the utility of global and transnational frameworks in studies of the American Great Plains.

Johnson's early invocation of the iconography of Sonny Rollins's album *Way out West* may leave some readers hungry for even more historical examples of popular invocations of the frontier myth to complement the discussion of literary works. This is a fine and well-crafted book. It urgently needs to be read in the continuum of scholarship on early national ideologies of manhood by Dana Nelson and Robyn Wiegman.

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*Vanished Act: The Life and Art of Weldon Kees.* By James Reidel. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xvii + 398 pp. Photographs, notes, index. \$35.00.

When poet Weldon Kees walked away into the fogs of the Golden Gate Bridge he made

his life and ironic style into the stuff of myth. In the years since his disappearance he has commonly been remembered less for his remarkable verses than as an emblematic suicide or runaway or victim of his times.

These are unpromising circumstances for a sober biographer, who could only be compromised by the temptation to exorcise old demons. It is no discredit to James Reidel's industry or acuity that after some 360 informative pages Kees and his terrible privacies remain at arm's length. Reidel's research is heroically exhaustive and scrupulous. His narrative follows in sometimes excruciating detail Kees's relatively well-documented life from his boyhood in the Beatrice, Nebraska, of the 1920s, through his Midwestern education, primarily at Lincoln, to library and literary work in Denver, an artistic flowering in New York City during World War II, then to San Francisco where the trail runs out at the entrance to the Golden Gate Bridge.

Reidel clearly assumes that if he is faithful in small things larger issues will take care of themselves. That they do so only intermittently is partly a function of Kees's own personality, which was fragmentary and elusive even to himself. He seemed always to be adrift in a maze of mirrors, in the process of composing an identity he might live with. He was an urbane man who could never break his psychic or fiscal dependence on small-town Nebraska. He was a nihilist and depressive who could also be uncommonly funny. Although he has been called a renaissance man, he never quite became all, or any, of the men he aspired to be. He was almost a novelist, almost a critic, almost an important abstract painter, almost a musician, almost a playwright, almost a filmmaker, almost an impresario. Even his durable poetry was never fully carried through. It was an intense but inconsistent priority.

What cannot emerge spontaneously from an assembly of details about such a fugitive subject is, for instance, a coherent sense of his political development, if indeed he had any. Or of his marriage. Or of how homosexual he might have been. Kees wrote letters full of

contempt for gay men, but Reidel hints throughout his study about troublesome ambiguities of desire. Such issues are obviously touchy, but once raised they should be defined and brought into focus. Similar problems of diffusion weaken the characterization of people around Kees, most seriously with regard to Ann Swan, his wife, and Norris Getty, his best friend and something of an alter ego.

To push such second-guessing further would be to risk injustice to Reidel, whose important and welcome biography opens windows on things previously only half-known, not only on the haunted life of his enigmatic protagonist, but on a particularly interesting cycle of our literary history.

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*Toward a Native American Critical Theory.* By Elvira Pulitano. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. x + 233 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00.

In this book, author Elvira Pulitano analyzes and evaluates selected writings by Paula Gunn Allen, Robert Allen Warrior, Craig Womack, Greg Sarris, Louis Owens, and Gerald Vizenor in their relation to post-modern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial thought. As she privileges cross-cultural and cosmopolitan paradigms and hybridic identity constructions, she de-emphasizes culture- or nation-specific identifications and describes authors and texts mostly as *Native* or *Native American*, dismissing, for example, the cultural grounding in the work by Osage scholar Robert Allen Warrior on other writers from the Great Plains culture area as "Nativist." She explains her leaning toward a "crosscultural dialogic approach" as "quite natural" because of her own "readerly position"—without fully explaining the implications of this position. Rather, she presumes a constituency for her readings of Native American works, a "we,"

that seems to legitimize her approach "if we want a Native American theory to challenge the binary opposition of Western conceptual frameworks."

Who is "we"? In the introduction, after arguing convincingly that (literary) theory may have many facets and is therefore not just the domain of Western scholarship, she asserts the significance of a "connection between critical theory and oral tradition" and the problematic nature of "separatist approaches to a Native discourse" as her main tenets. Their repeated reassertion in the subsequent chapters gives the book its cohesiveness, but the ranking of the Native critics on a "bad to good" scale makes her reasoning too predictable, contradicting the openness of the so-called trickster discourse that she favors. Also, instead of culturally and socio-politically contextualizing "the gynosophical perspective" of Paula Gunn Allen's work, she merely criticizes it for its essentialism. Similarly, she critiques Warrior's and Womack's "tribalcentric" attitude toward creating a literary theory and their notions of sovereignty not in culture- and history-specific contexts but partly through undue comparisons with postcolonial scholars like Appiah who do not share the same colonial history. However, she clearly shows her appreciation for Sarris and Owens, seeing them as "deeply committed to a discourse on hybridity and dialogism," using the oral traditions to challenge Western conventions of theorizing. Finally, to her, Vizenor is the most "revolutionary," his trickster discourse merging "Native epistemology with Western literary forms," restoring "the liberative, imaginative freedom inspired by tribal storytelling." For a reader from the other side of the imperial divide this form of revolution might be the easiest one to accept.

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*Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing.* Edited by MariJo Moore. Foreword by Vine Deloria Jr. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003. xvi + 352 pp. \$16.95 paper.

*Genocide of the Mind* is hardly the happiest of titles. Not only is the metaphor itself a muddle impossible to imagine, but the collection's dominant tone is more about cultural survival, not cultural genocide, as the editor herself indicates in explaining the title: "This anthology is a testament to American Indian consciousness continuing to circulate, regardless of past or present genocidal attempts, whether cerebral, endemic, systematic, or otherwise." Confusing, too, is the book's ostensible focus on the "urban Indian" and the sad history of Relocation as government policy. This is what Vine Deloria Jr.'s foreword would have us believe, and the first section of essays is indeed about "Keeping the Home Fires Burning in Urban Circles." But the collection is ultimately, like many such anthologies, a hodgepodge of essays arranged into various ad hoc categories, such as "Young American Indians," "Native Languages," and "Indians as Mascots." The title of the final section, "Who We Are," offers a clearer summation, after all, of this collection's articulation of Native identity. In sum, while many of the essays do "write back" against the Euro-American ideology of cultural genocide, the reader seeking a focused *raison d'être* here may well come away disappointed.

Those interested in Native literatures, however, will be pleased by many of the individual essays and impressed by the inclusion of previously published work by such longtime Native luminaries as Leslie Silko, Simon Ortiz, Paula Gunn Allen, Maurice Kenny, and Carter Revard. Of even greater interest, perhaps, are the younger writers included here. Newcomers Mary Black Bonnet, Joel Waters, Neil McKay, and Ben Geobe all ably augment Deloria and Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve in representing the Lakota/Dakota perspective; and younger Cherokee, Osage, and Anishinaabe authors also



get their ample due. At last, if the heyday of Momaday and Silko initiated a shift of interest from Native writers of the Great Plains to those of the desert Southwest, this collection offers some redress to that geo-literary exodus.

The Great Plains is the setting, too, of David Seals's incredible essay, "Buffalo Medicine," is certainly the most avant-garde in style of the works herein—and also the most controversial, in its Deep-Ecology defense of the buffalo of the Black Hills. Indeed, Seals's naturism leads me to a final quibble, regarding the editor's introduction to the "Indians as Mascots" section. "Indians are human beings, not animals," she writes: "Therefore we should not be used as mascots." But the human/animal distinction is not one that a Native American should glibly make. From traditional Native creation stories, through Nicholas Black Elk, to contemporary poets such as Ortiz, Revard, and Kenny—and, indeed, in many of the essays in this very collection—the crucial perception that humans *are* animals and thus partake in a fellowship with other species should never be forgotten, whatever the specific human political matters of the day. There are other genocides—of other species—taking place as we speak, and each loss is the death of an "oyate," of a "first nation." The blithe assertion that "humans are not animals" at least allows, if not fosters, such an ongoing genocide.

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*Teaching Places.* By Audrey J. Whitson. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. xiii + 178 pp. Photographs, map appendix, notes, bibliography. \$24.95 paper.

Audrey Whitson reaches down and stirs something deep in the soul. Her love of the land is respectful, serious, irresistible. The terrain she captures so vividly on paper as a record

of her Alberta pilgrimage moves the heart of any reader who has known and loved the prairies. "The land is calling you, no matter who you are, calling you home." This book truly does call the prairie soul back to its home. Whitson's is a journey that is deeply spiritual, without being orthodox. Her spirituality is articulated as understandable and embodied; it is felt through her language and use of metaphor.

*Teaching Places* captures the mysticism of the wilderness and the mystery of a diverse landscape. Of particular interest is her pilgrimage to the sand dunes at Wainwright, southeast of Edmonton. Their very presence on this land evokes incredulity, wonderment, and awe. The suspense during Whitson's visit there only heightens the spiritual confrontation of the self and the soul. These meetings are never easy, but when mediated by the beauty and sometimes danger of her natural surroundings, metaphor builds on metaphor; the soul becomes the land, and the changes to the land become the work of the self on the soul. Listen to the land, and you will hear wisdom, Whitson whispers through the text.

The autobiographical content that fills a good portion of the book is not where Whitson shines. Explorations of a few compelling or inspirational characters from her family history may have yielded a more cohesive, satisfying story. One of the book's important lessons, however, is that all families—be they families of persons, flora, or fauna—are interconnected in complicated but important ways.

There is a strong undercurrent of ecological awareness throughout Whitson's writing. Through knowledge, we gain understanding, and through understanding, respect. Respect for the land, the self, the soul, and the recognition and understanding of their interconnectedness are central intents of the journey. We must protect our sacred places, we must protect our land from invasion and destruction. *Teaching Places* ends with a warning: *pay attention*. We must listen to the land, the rocks, the trees, and the animals for guidance. We are damaging what is sacred, and this sacredness

is precisely what Whitson exhibits so eloquently.

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*Wyoming Trucks, True Love, and the Weather Channel: A Woman's Adventure.* By Jeffe Kennedy. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. ix + 165 pp. \$23.95.

Kennedy's subtitle is apt, for her book narrates the education of a biologist who becomes a second-generation environmentalist, or at least what she calls a second-generation environmentalist. As a consultant, she often works in the Plains states assessing the compliance of public drinking water programs with EPA regulations. Some of these regulations are based on research done in graduate school by field experts one college generation before hers—now often field experts on teams with her. One such site she describes in the Painted Creek, near Phoenix, which she visits once yearly, and where she shows us with an artist's eye the precision required to recover the creek to its original pristine shape, including the exact order in which rocks are arranged. Other sites include several Plains states.

Kennedy tells what goes into the making of a biologist, though of course her story is unique. A plane crash killed her father when she was three. Later when she was twenty-four, she and her mother found courage enough to visit the site of the crash in North Carolina, where the two commemorate that most significant event in their lives by burying a small piece of metal in what was barely a crater. Planes figure again when members of her consulting firm find themselves grounded on September 11, 2001. Though they have rental cars, and are in North Dakota for an exit meeting, the group doesn't pay enough attention to the TV in the morning to realize they are stranded. They do

finally locate routes out and call one another, relieved to find themselves home safely, Kennedy in Wyoming.

Scorning home economics and particularly the award she received in it in high school, Kennedy discovers that she loves home economics after all. She knows she loves science "because it was about life. . . . But the kernel of it all is that I like to learn, to know, to understand the world—and food, flowers, colors, angles, patterns are part of that"; and so, she discovers, home economics has its place, too, for she also loves what cooking and sewing do to help her value her relationships, her relatives, her flower garden, and her inheritances.

What she discovers in these patterns are parallels that structure her life. Her mother remarried, so she has a step-father—who remains physically somewhat distant. She herself has a relationship with a man who is divorced, and, in a similar parallel, she also has to appear distant to her partner's child when the child becomes dangerously ill. She writes of that illness with breathtaking speed and emotion.

When she talks about Wyoming, she is amused to find that no one ever mentions Wyoming on weather stations. But at the end of the book, she speaks of the wind of the High Plains, that wind that's like no other. Perhaps in reference to her geologist partner, perhaps in reference to science, and perhaps to the romance of life itself, that wind, she says, is like waves. And in the Medicine Bows she can stand on a "blasted circle" coated with gray lichen: "A coral reef of the high plains." She knows that the High Plains are simply water; water, that is, collapsed by time, a scientist might say. She has discovered that science is part of the truth, and ends the book with a metaphysical touch.

*Wyoming Trucks* is a lively and thoughtful autobiography, in which Kennedy balances stories epitomizing love of life, knowledge of death, awareness of loss, a keen sense of the importance of family and relationships, and the powerful need for the protection of nature.

Kennedy knows how to pace, teaches respect for life and nature, and offers an oblique sense of the metaphysical.

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*Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field.* Edited by Mick Gidley. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xiii + 178 pp. Photographs, notes, references, index. \$49.95.

Mick Gidley is without a doubt the primary advocate of Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952). As a photographer of North American Indians in the early twentieth century, Curtis produced work that needs an advocate since it is often viewed today as fake, exploitative, and thus controversial. Curtis's magnum opus, *The North American Indian* (1907-1930), is a remarkable collection of images, some posed, some manipulated, some art, some ethnographic, some nostalgic, some realistic, but always compelling. Because of the widespread interest in Curtis, Gidley's current publication, drawing on an assortment of unpublished reports, letters, field notes, and little known newspaper and magazine articles, will be read with great interest, as well it should.

The book is divided into materials from the Southwest, Plains, Northwest, and West Coast. The Plains section includes a newspaper article, "Did You Ever Try to Photograph an Indian?" (1900); reminiscences of William W. Phillips, an assistant of Curtis, about their work among the Northern Cheyenne in 1905; a *Scribner's* article by Curtis on "Vanishing Indian Types: The Tribes of the Northwest Plains" (1905-06), with views on US Government policy and his firsthand experience on a number of reservations; an excerpt from *World's Work*, written by Edmond S. Meany (1907), of a visit to the Sioux with Curtis; a

letter from William E. Myers to Frederick W. Hodge (1908) about Teton Sioux ceremonialism; a letter from Edwin J. Dalby to Edmond S. Meany (1908) about field work; and a memoir by Alfred C. Haddon of work among the Blackfoot Indians of Montana (1909). The Plains section covers two of the five research phases that Gidley enumerates: (1) pre-1906, when Curtis worked largely alone or with members of his family, primarily taking photographs; (2) 1906-1912, when the project was well funded by J. Pierpont Morgan and included field ethnographers working with Curtis; (3) 1912-1915, the height of his fame; (4) 1915-1922, partial inactivity, probably due to World War I, his efforts to work in the Hollywood movie industry, as well as increased marital problems; and (5) 1922-1927, the years during which the last of his field work was done.

Gidley offers a good balance of the small number of records that have survived from this grand endeavor. Although a group effort, very few records written by Myers, the major ethnologist on the project, or others of the team have survived. Thus the Curtis project continues to highlight Curtis, a fundamental problem in all long-term publications. Curtis's images emphasize the picturesque as demonstrated by his use of pictorialism photography. His work is either loved for the elegance with which he imaged the American Indian, or hated because he so completely embraced the concept of the "vanishing race" and consequently chose to record "traditional" ways, even when this required intervening and doctoring individuals' clothing and material culture.

This is an important book for those of us who respect and love Curtis's work.

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*William S. Hart: Projecting the American West.* By Ronald L. Davis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xvi + 269 pp. Photographs, filmography, source notes, index. \$29.95.

This first biography of the early film star William S. Hart is solidly researched and full of useful information, even if written in unexciting prose. Hart is a difficult subject, a taciturn, self-dramatizing figure about whose peripatetic childhood on the Great Plains little is known and who came to live the Western persona created through his silent movies. He was forty-nine before his first film in 1914, and his career lasted only a decade. Still, in those years he starred in forty-eight feature-length films (and an additional nineteen two-reelers), for many of which he also served as de facto writer and co-director. The output is daunting, but one missed opportunity of Ronald L. Davis's book is any exploration of the strengths of particular films, most of which are tossed off with a sentence or two of analysis, and it becomes impossible even to guess which of them can now be seen. (In an era from which at least 80 percent of US features are lost, Hart's have a relatively good survival rate, partly because he himself appreciated their worth and kept copies).

The biography is at its informative best in tracking Hart's quarter-century as a touring stage actor from the late 1880s (notably in *Ben-Hur*, *The Squaw Man*, and *The Virginian*) and in exploring his growing resistance to corporate Hollywood of the 1920s. The book also comes alive in a chapter about Hart's sad late-life romances, about which Davis discovered an evocative trove of letters. Often, however, the author seems not to care much for his subject, or at least holds Hart at a distance, and regards his Western films as little more than nostalgia. (Most earlier Westerns, we're informed, "were rubbish.") By seeing Hart merely as "an unhappy, immature man looking for a way to relive his idealized boyhood" or as "a simple, fanciful man of narrow perspective," Davis skirts the ways in which Hart's

personal loneliness, despondent world view, and pessimism about modernity also infused his best surviving films (among them *The Bargain*, *Hell's Hinges*, and *The Whistle*).

For a wider perspective on the movies, one still needs to consult Diane Kosarski's *The Complete Films of William S. Hart* (1980). For a more sympathetic sense of Hart himself, one cannot do better than to visit his ranch in northern Los Angeles County (see [www.hartmuseum.org](http://www.hartmuseum.org)). By the terms of his will, guests are welcomed free and no fees permitted; Hart was never one for newfangled commerce.

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*The Texas Post Office Murals: Art for the People.* By Philip Parisi. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004. x + 181 pp. Map, photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00.

Stodgy university presses, in these hard economic times, have begun to produce books that have a broad appeal to scholars and casual readers alike, and *The Texas Post Office Murals* is a splendid example of the genre. Beautifully designed and printed, mostly in vivid color, Parisi's book becomes both a superb tourist's guide to 1930s art in Texas and a primary research document for students of American art and culture. Given the size of the state of Texas, he has also performed a valuable service by saving all of us a lot of dusty mileage along blue highways.

Wisely, the author has limited his history of how the federal government came to send mural painters into the boondocks in the depths of the Great Depression to a few pithy pages. The literature on the field is already extensive, especially in the areas of aesthetics and the bureaucratic structure of the Treasury Department agency charged with the post office and courthouse mural program. Instead,

Parisi gets right down to grassroots business: where are such murals to be found in Texas? Who painted them? What has happened to the pictures over the years since? Did local people like them? Do they like 'em still today? And, most important perhaps, what are the stories being told, the symbols on display, the issues important to dwellers on the Texas Plains during hard times? This is grassroots history with its boots on—local, fine-grained, and endlessly fascinating.

Take, for example, Parisi's deconstruction of the surreal, almost savage *Stampede* mural of 1940 by noted Western artist Tom Lea in the Odessa Post Office. Lea, he tells us, took the scene of maddened longhorns poised against a blackened sky from the traditional cowboy ballad "Little Joe the Wrangler." The ranch hand pitching to his death in the foreground comes from the song, as do the awful red eyes of the steers, the flashes of lightning, and the cruel horns of the cattle. It was rare for federal murals to express strong emotion, let alone outright terror, but we learn that Lea's work is still highly regarded in Odessa today, where it has been protected and restored in a new postal facility.

Even the most peaceful scene—the townscape in the Ranger, Texas, Post Office, from 1939—has a story to tell. The artist found Ranger a virtual ghost town but gave hope to the former boomtown with a picture of the clean, prosperous place it could once again become. Hope on the wall, for a mere \$880 (the artist's unprincely fee)! Delight for the reader, for only \$50!

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Mexico Press, 2003. xii + 175 pp. Color photographs, map, list of plates. \$39.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Steve Fitch's photographs depicting the interior of abandoned houses, schools, and stores on the High Plains are struck though with melancholy. Not the self-absorbed and self-pitying brand, but that of an observer who has come upon something tragic—lost potential, displaced lives, failed communities.

Thomas Jefferson's vision for the expansion of the fledgling United States was centered on the image of a free nation populated by yeoman farmers tilling the soil and reaping the benefit of their own labor. That ideal, regardless of collateral damage, helped fuel the settlement of the West. And for the most part Jefferson's vision was realized, albeit imperfectly. Farming and ranching communities that dot the Plains have persisted at a human scale for roughly one hundred years, punctuated by bumper crops and barren fields. And while life at the foot of the Rockies was never easy, it went on. But the family farms that hold communities together have proven no match for industrial scale agribusiness. The human landscape of the Plains is changing.

The pictures collected in *Gone: Photographs of Abandonment on the High Plains* document the aftermath of that transition: abandoned structures with roofs collapsing and paint peeling—the glow of outdoors pouring through every crack and crevice as if trying to break in. The images are beautifully still with an unflinching descriptive power. This is due both to Fitch's matter-of-fact compositional approach and his choice of tool—an 8 x 10 inch view camera. Superficially the photographs fit neatly into the continuum of image making pioneered by Walker Evans. Fitch's, however, offer something else that I found hard to name initially. For all their stillness and obvious emptiness they have an uneasy quality. Not horror movie scary, but more an underlying tension. Fitch accomplishes this by avoiding a rigid approach to composition (the images often feel a bit off balance) and through

*Gone: Photographs of Abandonment on the High Plains.* Photography by Steve Fitch. Foreword by Merrill Gilfillan. Essays by Steve Fitch, Kathleen Stewart Howe, and Evelyn A. Schlatter. Albuquerque: University of New

finding the right details. It seems as if the people who once occupied these vacant structures left in a hurry. The Smith family gets up, finishes the morning chores, eats breakfast, loads the car and leaves forever. Gone. A child's drawing left hanging on the wall; bags on the bed waiting to be packed; the stage backdrop for the last school play still in place. Family farms and small towns all dying sudden deaths.

A bedroom, probably a child's, in an abandoned house in Pritchett, Colorado, mustard colored paint falling away from a wall that bears the hand painted words "TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE." Thomas Jefferson's dream gone bust.

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## BOOK NOTES

*Writing Together/Writing Apart: Collaboration in Western American Literature.* By Linda K. Karell. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. Notes, works cited, index. xli + 219 pp. \$49.95.

Linda K. Karell explores the concept and practice of collaborative writing, including such traditions as ghostwriting or "edited" texts; dual-authored texts such as those produced by Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris; and the incorporation of existing diaries or letters from other writers, Wallace Stegner's use of the correspondence of Mary Hallock Foote in *Angle of Repose* being a prime example. Karell challenges the notion of writing as a solitary activity, arguing that collaboration is integral to the writing process.

\* \* \*

*A Forgotten Voice: A Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth.* By Ann G. Klein. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press, 2002. Illustrations, notes, index. xviii + 246 pp. \$22.95 paper.

This biography tells the story of Dr. Leta Stetter Hollingworth (1886-1939) who became an influential psychologist, educator, author, feminist, and advocate for gifted children. Born and raised in western Nebraska, she overcame an abusive childhood and gender prejudice to go on to graduate Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Nebraska. Gifted herself, she later founded the first school for gifted

children in New York City and published many articles and books on the education and special needs of exceptional children.

\* \* \*

*In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000-Year History of American Indians.* By Jake Page. New York: Free Press, 2003. Maps, photographs, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$16.00 paper.

Going back two millennia, author Jake Page draws on recent research as well as his own experiences living among the Hopi to purport to show Indians as they are rather than as westerners habitually view them.

\* \* \*

*Taking Land, Breaking Land: Women Colonizing the American West and Kenya, 1840-1940.* By Glenda Riley. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. Photographs, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

Glenda Riley compares and contrasts the lives of women colonists on the American and Kenyan frontiers, discussing the role of women in the continuation of colonization in the American West and its collapse in Kenya. Riley examines the importance of gender and race in shaping women's frontier experiences.

\* \* \*

*Extreme Virtue: Truth and Leadership in Five Great American Lives.* By Crispin Sartwell. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. Sources, index. vii + 141 pp. \$49.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

Looking at what he believes has gone wrong in the American political system in recent years, Crispin Sartwell uses five exemplary lives to describe what kind of leadership we need. The public figures Sartwell features are anarchists Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre, conservative senator Barry Goldwater, Lakotan John Fire Lane Deer, and Omaha-born black nationalist Malcolm X.

\* \* \*

*Saskatchewan First Nations: Lives Past and Present.* Edited by Christian Thompson. Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004. Sources and further reading. xxiv + 151 pp. \$19.95 paper.

This volume contains more than 125 biographies showcasing the contributions of First Nations people to Saskatchewan and demonstrating the diversity and depth of First Nations communities. Also included are brief histories of the development in Saskatchewan of First Nations politics, education, health care, media, and sports.

\* \* \*

*Women and Gender in the American West.* Edited by Mary Ann Irwin and James F. Brooks. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. Notes. x + 437 pp. \$22.95 paper.

Winners of the Coalition for Western Women's History's Joan Jensen-Darlis Miller Prize for outstanding scholarship on gender and the experiences of women in the North American West, these essays, collected here for the first time, address subjects ranging from Mormon plural wives to women's experience in Spanish Borderland slavery, from interracial marriage to the sexual exploitation of Indian women in British Columbia, from Navajo women weavers in the market economy to women's reform work in gold rush era San Francisco and settler women in western Canada.

\* \* \*

*Vicious: Wolves and Men in America.* By Jon T. Coleman. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. Photographs, illustrations, notes, index. xv + 270 pp. \$28.00.

From subjects of nightmares and legends to a symbol of the great American wilderness, Coleman explores the view of wolves in the history of America. Part three encompasses the American West with chapters on Mormon Americans on the Great Plains and on exterminating wolves in colonial Utah.

# NOTES AND NEWS

## CALL FOR PAPERS: PLAINS INDIAN SEMINAR

The 2005 Plains Indian Seminar at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center will be held September 29 to October 2, 2005, in Cody, Wyoming. The conference will address the theme: *Native Land & the People of the Great Plains*. The 2005 conference explores the relationship between Native people of the Great Plains and the land in which they have lived from generation to generation. For people of the Plains, the land and its resources are integrally connected to tribal traditions, knowledge, beliefs, economies, and other cultural elements. Suggested topics for presentation include historical and contemporary tribal economies and uses of land and resources, relationship of land to cultural traditions, protection of sacred sites and places of historic significance, indigenous knowledge, artistic expressions and the land, effects of tourism and other commercial uses on reservation lands, land and resource management, and historical and contemporary issues related to land, water, and other resources. Presentations that address new areas of Native American scholarship are encouraged. Historians, anthropologists, educators, art historians, dancers, and musicians are invited to submit a 250-word abstract along with a résumé by February 1, 2005. Scholars and educators from tribal colleges and communities are especially invited to participate. For more information contact: Lillian Turner, Public Programs Director, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY 82414-3428, 307/578-4028, <lilliant@bbhc.org>, <<http://www.bbhc.org/pis/speakers.cfm>>.

## CALL FOR PAPERS: 37TH ANNUAL DAKOTA CONFERENCE

The Center for Western Studies has issued a call for proposals for the 37th Annual Dakota Conference on Northern Plains History, Literature, Art, and Archaeology. The conference will be held at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD, from April 22-23, 2005. The theme of the conference is "The Changing Black Hills." This will be the third program in a series examining the major geographic and cultural identities that define the Dakotas and a large portion of the Northern Plains, the 2005 Dakota Conference invites proposals for papers and sessions examining issues of ownership, natural resource use, and cultural identity with respect to the Black Hills. Paper and session proposals on all aspects of the Dakotas and Northern Plains are also welcome. Cash awards are offered for best papers in professional, amateur, and student categories. Deadline for submissions: on or before January 21, 2005. Send one-page paper or session proposal with title, brief description, and biographical sketch, along with presenter name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, to: Dr. Harry F. Thompson, Dakota Conference Director for Western Studies, Box 727, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD 57197, E-mail: <[harry\\_thompson@augie.edu](mailto:harry_thompson@augie.edu)>

## CALL FOR PAPERS: 10TH INTERNATIONAL CATHER SEMINAR

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln & the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation present the 10th International



Cather Seminar 2005. "Violence, the Arts, and Cather" will be the theme of the Cather Seminar and will begin June 18, 2005. This will be a joint-sited seminar based in the two prominent places of Cather's Nebraska experience—Red Cloud and Lincoln. The seminar will open with three days in Red Cloud. While there, participants will stay in private homes; meals will be served in the elementary school and the community center. Locations for paper presentations, plenary sessions, and performances include the Opera House, the school, and the community center. The second phase of the seminar will be on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. Participants will be housed on campus; and UNL classrooms, auditoriums, and galleries will accommodate presentations and discussions. Papers on all aspects of Willa Cather's work, life, and times are invited for possible presentation. Diverse critical and theoretical perspectives are encouraged. Those focusing on the seminar theme are especially welcome. Interested contributors should submit abstracts of 500 words with

a cover letter and brief résumé by March 18, 2005. Submit proposals to: Susan Rosowski & Guy Reynolds, Co-Directors, International Seminar, Dept. of English, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0693. For further information visit [www.unl.edu/cather](http://www.unl.edu/cather) or e-mail Beth Burke, Cather Project Program Coordinator at [eburke3@unl.edu](mailto:eburke3@unl.edu).

#### CALL FOR PAPERS: NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS HISTORY CONFERENCE

The 40th Northern Great Plains History Conference, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, will be held September 29 to October 1, 2005, at the Plaza Hotel and Suites in Eau Claire. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be Donald Ritchie of the U.S. Senate Historian's office. Proposals for papers or sessions in any area of Plains history are welcome. Send one-page abstracts and vitae by March 31, 2005, to Robert Gough, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004.

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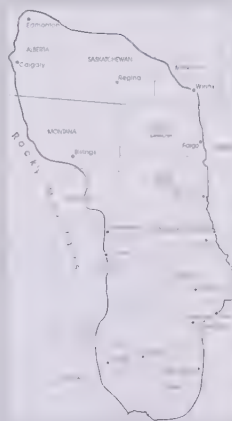
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## Fall 2004:

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The editors have gathered articles significant in expanding the knowledge base of newcomers to the Great Plains in order to provide a broader understanding of the populations of new immigrants.

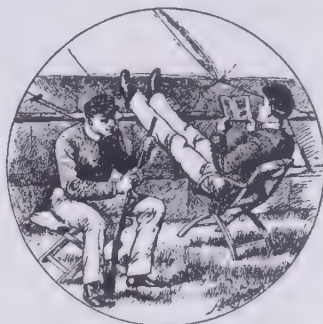
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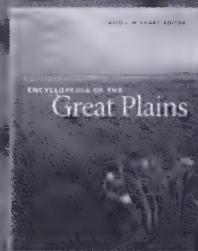
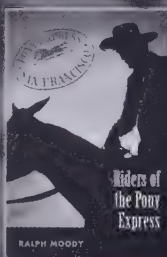
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